6

ESOP;

A

COMEDY.

BY

Sir JOHN VANBRUGH.

GLASGOW:
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PREFACE.

TO ſpeak for a play, if it can't ſpeak for itſelf is vain; and if it can, 'tis needleſs. For one of theſe reaſons (I can't yet tell which, for 'tis now but the ſecond day of acting) I reſolve to ſay nothing for Eſop, tho' I know he'd be glad of help; for let the beſt happen that can, his journey's up hill, with a dead Engliſh weight at the tail of him.

At Paris indeed he ſcrambled up ſomething faſter (for 'twas up hill there too) than I'm afraid he will do here: the French having more mercury in their heads, and leſs beef and pudding in their bellies. Our ſolidity may ſet hard, what their folly makes eaſy: for fools I own they are, you know we have found them ſo in the conduct of the war; I wiſh we may do ſo in the management of the peace: but that's neither Eſop's buſineſs, nor mine.

This play, gentlemen (or one not much unlike it) was writ in French about ſix years ſince by one Monſieur Bourſaut; 'twas play'd at Paris by the French comedians, and this was its fate:

The firſt day it appear'd, 'twas routed (people ſeldom being fond of what they don't underſtand, their own ſweet perſons excepted.) The ſecond (by the help of ſome bold knight-errants) it rally'd; the third it advanc'd; the fourth it gave a vigorous attack; and the fifth put all the feathers in town to the ſcamper, purſuing them on to the fourteenth, and then they cry'd out quarter.

'Tis not reaſonable to expect Eſop ſhould gain ſo

great a victory here, ſince 'tis poſſible by fooling with his ſword, I may have turn'd the edge on't. For I confeſs in the tranſlation I have not at all ſtuck to the original; nay, I have gone farther, I have wholly added the fifth act, and crowded a country gentleman into the fourth, for which I aſk Monſieur Bourſaut's pardon with all my heart, but doubt I never ſhall obtain it for bringing him into ſuch company. Tho after all, had I been ſo complaiſant to have waited on his play word for word, 'tis poſſible even that might not have enſur'd the ſucceſs of it: for tho it ſwam in France, it might have ſunk in England: their country abounds in cork, ours in lead.

PROLOGUE.

Gallants we never yet produc'd a play
With greater fears than this we act to-day;
Barren of all the graces of the ſtage,
Barren of all that entertains this age.
No hero, no romance, no plot, no ſhow,
No rape, no bawdy, no intrigue, no beau:
There's nothing in't with which we uſe to pleaſe ye;
With downright dull inſtruction w'are to teaze ye:
The ſtage turns pulpit, and the world's ſo fickle,
The play-houſe in a whim turns conventicle.
But preaching here muſt prove a hungry trade,
The patentees will find ſo, I'm afraid:
For tho with heavenly zeal you all abound,
As by your lives and morals may be found;
Tho every female here o'erflows with grace,
And chaſte Diana's written in her face;
The maids renounce the ſweets of fornication,
And one lewd wife's not left in all the nation;
Tho men grow true, and the foul fiend defy;
Tho tradeſmen cheat no more, nor lawyers lye;
Tho not one ſpot be found on Levi's tribe,
Nor one ſoft courtier that will touch a bribe;
Yet in the midſt of ſuch religious days,
Sermons have never borne the price of plays.

Dramatis Perſonae.

MEN.

Eſop.	Mr. *Cibber.*
Learchus, governor of Cyzicus.	Mr. *Dogget.*
Oronces, in love with Euphronia.	Mr. *Harland.*

WOMEN.

Euphronia, daughter to Learchus, in love with Oronces.	Mrs. *Temple.*
Doris, her nurſe.	Mrs. *Verbruggen.*

People who come to Eſop, upon ſeveral occaſions, independent one of another.

Two country tradeſmen.	Mr. *Pinkethman* and Mr. *Smeton.*
Roger, a country bumpkin.	Mr. *Haynes.*
Quaint, a herald.	Mr. *Pinkethman.*
Fruitful, an inn-keeper.	Mr. *Smeton.*
A country gentleman.	Mr. *Pinkethman.*
A prieſt, muſicians, &c.	
Hortenſia, an affected learned lady.	Mrs. *Kent.*
Aminta, a lewd mother.	Mrs. *Willis.*
Forge-Will, a ſcrivener's widow.	Mrs. *Finch.*
Fruitful, wife to the inn-keeper.	Mrs. *Powel.*

ESOP.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Learchus's houſe.

Enter Learchus, Euphronia, *and* Doris.

Lear. AT length I am bleſt with the ſight of the world's wonder, the delight of mankind, the incomparable Eſop. You had time to obſerve him laſt night, daughter, as he ſat at ſupper with me. Tell me how you like him, child; is he not a charming perſon?

Euph. Charming!

Lear. What ſay'ſt thou to him, Doris? thou art a good judge, a wench of a nice palate.

Dor. You wou'd not have me flatter, Sir?

Lear. No, ſpeak thy thoughts boldly.

Dor. Boldly, you ſay?

Lear. Boldly, I ſay.

Dor. Why then, Sir, my opinion of the gentleman is, that he's uglier than an old beau.

Lear. How! impudence.

Dor. Nay, if you are angry, Sir, ſecond thoughts are beſt; he's as proper as a pike-man, holds up his head like a dancing-maſter, has the ſhape of a barb, the face of an angel, the voice of a cherubim, the ſmell of a civet-cat—

Lear. In ſhort thou art fool enough not to be pleas'd with him.

Dor. Excuſe me for that, Sir, I have wit enough to make myſelf merry with him———

Lear. If his body's deform'd, his ſoul is beautiful: wou'd to kind heaven, as he is, my daughter cou'd but find the means to pleaſe him.

Euph. To what end, dear father?

Lear. That he might be your husband, dear daughter.

Euph. My husband? ſhield me kind Heaven——

Dor. Pſha! he has a mind to make us laugh, that's all.

Lear. Eſop then is not worth her care, in thy opinion.

Dor. Why truly, Sir, I'm always for making ſuitable matches, and don't much approve of breeding monſters. I wou'd have nothing marry a baboon, but what has been got by a monkey.

Lear. How dar'ſt thou liken ſo incomparable a man to ſo contemptible a beaſt?

Dor. Ah, the inconſtancy of this world! out of ſight, out of mind. Your little monkey is ſcarce cold in his grave, and you have already forgot what you us'd ſo much to admire: do but call him to remembrance, Sir, in his red coat, new gloves, little hat, and clean linen; then diſcharge your conſcience, utter the truth from your heart, and tell us whether he was not the prettier gentleman of the two——by my virginity, Sir, (tho that's but a ſlippery oath, you'll ſay) had they made love to me together, Eſop ſhould have worn the willow.

Lear. Since nothing but an animal will pleaſe thee, 'tis pity my monkey had not that virginity thou haſt ſworn by. But I, whom wiſdom charms, even in the homlieſt dreſs, can never think the much-deſerving Eſop unworthy of my daughter.

Dor. Now, in the name of wonder, what is't you ſo admire in him?

Lear. Hark, and thou ſhalt know; but you, Euphronia, Be you more eſpecially attentive.

'Tis true he's plain; but that's, my girl, a trifle.
All manly beauties ſeated in the ſoul;
And that of Eſop, envy's ſelf muſt own
Outſhines whate'er the world has yet produc'd.
Croeſus, the proſperous favourite of heaven;
Croeſus, the happieſt potentate on earth;
Whoſe treaſure (tho immenſe) is the leaſt part
Of what he holds from Providence's care,
Leans on his ſhoulder as his grand ſupport,
Admires his wiſdom, doats upon his truth,
And makes him pilot to imperial ſway.
But in this elevated poſt of power,
What's his employ? where does he point his thoughts?
To live in ſplendour, luxury and eaſe,

Do endleſs miſchiefs, by neglecting good,
And build his family on others ruins?
No:
He ſerves the prince, and ſerves the people too;
Is uſeful to the rich, and helps the poor;
There's nothing ſtands neglected, but himſelf.
With conſtant pain, and yet with conſtant joy,
From place to place throughout the realm he goes,
With uſeful leſſons, form'd to every rank:
The people learn obedience from his tongue.
The magiſtrate is guided in command,
The prince is minded of a father's care:
The ſubjects taught the duty of a child.
And as 'tis dangerous to be bold with truth,
He often calls for fable to his aid,
Where under abject names of beaſts and birds,
Virtue ſhines out, and vice is cloath'd in ſhame.
And thus by inoffenſive wiſdom's force,
He conquers folly whereſoe'er he moves?
This is his portraite.

Dor. A very good picture of a very ill face!

Lear. Well, daughter; what, not a word? is it poſſible any thing that I am father of can be untouch'd with ſo much merit?

Euph. My duty may make all things poſſible: but Eſop is ſo ugly, Sir.

Lear. His ſoul has ſo much beauty in't, your reaſon ought to blind your eyes: beſides, my intereſt is concern'd; his power alarms me. I know throughout the kingdom he's the ſcourge of evil magiſtrates, turns out governors when they turn tyrants; breaks officers for falſe muſters; excludes judges from giving ſentence, when they have been abſent during the trial; hangs lawyers when they take fees on both ſides; forbids phyſicians to take money of thoſe they don't cure. 'Tis true, my innocence ought to baniſh my fears: but my government, child, is too delicious a morſel, not to ſet many a frail mouth a watering: who knows what accuſations envy may produce? but all wou'd be ſecure, if thou could'ſt touch the heart of Eſop. Let me blow up thy ambition, girl; the fire of that will make thy eyes ſparkle at him. [*She ſighs.*

——What's that ſigh for now? ha!
A young husband, by my conſcience: ah daughter, had'ſt thou a young husband, he'd make thee ſigh indeed. I'll tell thee what he is compos'd of. He has a wig full of pulvilio, a pocket full of dice, a heart full of treaſon, a mouth full of lyes, a belly full of drink, a carcaſe full of plaiſters, a tail full of pox, and a head full of——nothing. There's his picture; wear it at thy heart if thou can'ſt. But here comes one of greater worth.

Enter Eſop.

Lear. Good morrow to my noble lord; your excellency——

Eſop. Softly, good governor: I'm a poor wanderer from place to place; too weak to train the weight of grandeur with me! the name of excellency's not for me.

Lear. My noble lord, 'tis due to your imploy; your predeceſſors all——

Eſop. My predeceſſors all deſerv'd it, Sir, they were great men in wiſdom, birth, and ſervice; whilſt I, a poor, unknown, decrepit wretch, mounted aloft for fortune's paſtime, expect each moment to conclude the farce, by ſinking to the mud from whence I ſprung.

Lear. Great Croeſus's gratitude will ſtill ſupport you; his coffers all are open to your will, your future fortune's wholly in your power.

Eſop. But 'tis a power that I ſhall ne'er employ.

Lear. Why ſo, my lord?

Eſop. I'll tell you, Sir.

A hungry goat, who had not eat
Some nights and days——(for want of meat)
Was kindly brought at laſt,
By Providence's care,
To better cheer,
After a more than penitential faſt.
He found a barn well ſtor'd with grain,
To enter in requir'd ſome pain;
But a delicious bait
Makes the way eaſy, tho the paſs is ſtrait.
Our gueſt obſerving various meats,
He put on a good modiſh face,

He takes his place,
He ne'er ſays grace,
But where he likes, he there falls to and eats.
At length with jaded teeth and jaws,
He made a pauſe.
And finding ſtill ſome room,
Fell to as he had done before,
For time to come laid in his ſtore;
And when his guts could hold no more,
He thought of going home.
But here he met the glutton's curſe;
He found his belly grown ſo great,
'Twas vain to think of a retreat,
Till he had render'd all he'ad eat,
And well he far'd no worſe.

To the application, governor.

Lear. 'Tis eaſy to be made, my lord.

Eſop. I'm glad on't. Truth can never be too clear. [*Seeing* Euph.] Is this young damſel your fair daughter, Sir?

Lear. 'Tis my daughter, my good lord: fair too, if ſhe appears ſuch in the eyes of the unerring Eſop.

Eſop, going up to ſalute her.] I never ſaw ſo beautiful a creature.

Lear. aſide.] Now's the time; kiſs, ſoft girl, and fire him.

Eſop, gazing at her.] How partial's nature 'twixt her form and mine!

Lear. aſide.] Look, look, look, how he gazes at her!—Cupid's hard at work, I ſee that already. Slap; there he hits him ——— if the wench would but do her part. But ſee, ſee, how the perverſe young baggage ſtands biting her thumbs, and won't give him one kind glance———ah the ſullen jade! had it been a handſome ſtrong dog of five and twenty, ſhe'd a fall'n a coquetting on't, with every inch about her. But may be it's I that ſpoil ſport. I'll make a pretence to leave them together. Will your lordſhip pleaſe to drink any coffee this morning?

Eſop. With all my heart, governor.

Lear. Your lordſhip will give me leave to go and order it myſelf; for unleſs I am by, 'tis never perfect.

Eſop. Provided you leave me this fair maid in hoſtage for your return, I conſent.

Lear. My good lord does my daughter too much honour.
Ah that the wretch wou'd but do her part. [*Aſide, going off.*
——hark you, huſſy—— [*Turning back to* Euphronia *aſide.*
——You can give yourſelf airs ſometimes, you know you can. Do you remember what work you made with yourſelf at church t'other day? play your tricks over again once more for my pleaſure, and let me have a good account of this ſtateſman, or, d'ye hear?——you ſhall die a maid; go chew upon that; go. [*Exit* Lear.

Eſop. Here I am left, fair damſel, too much expos'd to your charms, not to fall your victim.

Euph. Your fall will then be due to your own weakneſs, Sir; for Heaven's my witneſs, I neither endeavour nor wiſh to wound you.

Eſop. I underſtand you, lady, your heart's already diſpos'd of, 'tis ſeldom otherwiſe at your age.

Euph. My heart diſpos'd of!

Dor. Nay, never mince the matter, madam. The gentleman looks like a civil gentleman, e'en confeſs the truth to him: he has a good intereſt with your father, and no doubt will employ it to break the heatheniſh match he propoſes to you.

To Eſop. Yes, Sir, my young lady has been in love theſe two years, and that with as pretty a fellow as ever carried a virgin's heart; tall, ſtrait, young, vigorous, good clothes, long perriwig, clean linen; in brief, he has every thing that's neceſſary to ſet a young lady a longing, and to ſtay it when he has done: but her father, whoſe ambition makes him turn fool in his old age, comes with a back ſtroke upon us, and ſpoils all our ſport. Wou'd you believe it, Sir! he has propos'd to her to-day the moſt confounded ugly fellow: look, if the very thoughts of him don't ſet the poor thing a crying? and you, Sir, have ſo much power with the old gentleman, that one word from you would ſet us all right again. If he will have her a wife, in the name of Venus let him provide her a handſome husband, and not throw her into the paws of a thing that nature in a merry humour has made half man, half monkey.

Eſop. Pray what's the monſter's name, lady?

Euph. No matter for his name, Sir, my father will know who you mean at firſt word.

Eſop. But you ſhou'd not always chuſe by the outſide alone; believe me, fair damſel, a fine perriwig keeps many a fool's head from the weather: have a care of your young gallant.

Dor. There's no danger, I have examin'd him; his inſide's as good as his out; I ſay he has wit, and I think I know.

Euph. Nay, ſhe ſays true; he's even a miracle of wit and beauty: did you but ſee him, you'd be yourſelf my rival.

Eſop. Then you are reſolv'd againſt the monſter.

Dor. Fy, Sir, fy, I wonder you'll put her in mind of that foul, frightful thing: we ſhall have her dream of nothing all night but bats and owls, and toads and hedghogs, and then we ſhall have ſuch a ſqueaking and ſqualing with her, the whole houſe will be in an uproar: therefore, pray Sir, name him no more, but uſe your intereſt with her father that ſhe may never hear of him again.

Eſop. But if I ſhould be ſo generous to ſave you from the old gallant, what ſhall I ſay for your young one?

Euph. O, Sir, you may venture to enlarge upon his perfections; you need not fear ſaying too much in his praiſe.

Dor. And pray, Sir, be as copious upon the defects of t'other; you need not fear out-running the text there neither, ſay the worſt you can.

Euph. You may ſay the firſt is the moſt graceful man that Aſia ever brought forth.

Dor. And you may ſay the latter is the moſt deform'd monſter that copulation ever produc'd.

Euph. Tell him that Oronces (for that is his dear name) has all the virtues that compoſe a perfect hero.

Dor. And tell him that *pigmy* has all the vices that go to equip an attorney.

Euph. That to one I could be true to the laſt moment of my life.

Dor. That for t'other ſhe'd cuckold him the very day of her marriage.

This, Sir, in few words, is the theme you are desir'd to preach upon.

Esop. I never had one that furnish'd me with more matter.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My lord, there's a lady below desires to speak with your honour

Esop. What lady?

Ser. It's my lady—my lady—[*To* Doris.] The lady there, the wise lady, the great scholar, that no body can understand.

Dor. O ho, is it she? Pray let's withdraw, and oblige her, madam; she's ready to swoon at the insipid sight of one of her own sex.

Euph. You'll excuse us, Sir, we leave you to wiser company. [*Exeunt* Euph. *and* Dor.

Enter Hortensia.

Hort. The Deess, who from Atropos's breast preserves the names of heroes and their actions, proclaims your fame throughout this mighty orb, and——

Esop. Aside.] Shield me, my stars! what have you sent me here? For pity's sake, good lady, be more humane: my capacity is too heavy to mount to your Style: if you wou'd have me know what you mean, please to come down to my understanding.

Hort. I've something in my nature soars too high
For vulgar flight, I own;
But Esop's sphere must needs be within call;
Esop and I may sure converse together:
I know he's modest, but I likewise know
His intellects are categorical.

Esop. Now, by my faith, lady, I don't know what *intellect* is; and methinks *categorical* sounds as if you call'd me names. Pray speak that you may be understood; language was design'd for it, indeed it was.

Hort. Of vulgar things, in vulgar phrase we talk;
But when of Esop we must speak,
The theme's too lofty for an humble style:
Esop is sure no common character.

Esop. No, truly, I am something particular. Yet, if I am not mistaken, what I have extraordinary about me,

may be deſcrib'd in very homely language. Here was a young gentlewoman but juſt now pencil'd me out to a hair, I thought; and yet I vow to God the learned'ſt word I heard her make uſe of, was monſter.

Hort. That was a woman, Sir, a very woman; her Cogitations all were on the outward man:
But I ſtrike deeper, 'tis the mind I view.
The ſoul's the worthy object of my care;
The ſoul, that ſample of divinity, that glorious
Ray of heavenly light. The ſoul, that aweful
Throne of thought, that ſacred ſeat of contemplation.
The ſoul, that noble ſource of wiſdom,
That fountain of comfort,
That ſpring of joy, that happy token of eternal
Life; the ſoul, that———

Eſop. Pray, lady, are you married?

Hort. Why that queſtion, Sir?

Eſop. Only that I might wait upon your husband to wiſh him joy.

Hort. When people of my compoſition would marry, they firſt find ſomething of their own ſpecies to join with; I never could reſolve to take a thing of common fabrick to my bed, leſt when his brutiſh inclinations prompt him, he ſhou'd make me mother to a form like his own.

Eſop. Methinks a lady ſo extremely nice, ſhould be much at a loſs who to converſe with.

Hort. I keep my chamber, and converſe with myſelf; 'tis better being alone, than to miſ-ally one's converſation:
Men are ſcandalous, and women are inſipid,
Diſcourſe without figure makes me ſick at my ſoul:
O the charms of a metaphor!
What harmony there is in the words of erudition;
The muſick of them is inimaginable.

Eſop. Will you hear a fable, lady?

Hort. Willingly, Sir, the apologue pleaſes me when the application of it is juſt.

Eſop. It is, I'll anſwer for it.

Once on a time a nightingale
To changes prone;
Unconſtant, fickle, whimſical,
(A female one)
Who ſung like others of her kind,
Hearing a well-taught linet's airs,
Had other matters in her mind,
To imitate him ſhe prepares,
Her fancy ſtrait was on the wing:
I fly, quoth ſhe,
As well as he;
I don't know why
I ſhou'd not try
As well as he to ſing.
From that day forth ſhe chang'd her note,
She ſpoil'd her voice, ſhe ſtrain'd her throat:
She did, as learned women do,
Till every thing
That heard her ſing,
Wou'd run away from her——as I from you.

[*Exit* Eſop *running.*

Hortenſia *ſola.*

How groſsly does this poor world ſuffer itſelf to be impos'd upon?——Eſop, a man of ſenſe——Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Alas, poor wretch: I ſhou'd not have known him but by his deformity, his ſoul's as nauſeous to my underſtanding, as his odious body to my ſenſe of feeling. Well,

'Mongſt all the wits that are allow'd to ſhine,
Methinks there's nothing yet approaches mine:
Sure I was ſent the homely age t'adorn;
What ſtar, I know not, rul'd when I was born,
But every thing, beſides myſelf's my ſcorn.

[Exit.

ACT II.

Enter Euphronia *and* Doris.

Dor. WHAT in the name of Jove's the matter with you?
Speak, for heaven's ſake.

Euph. Oh! what ſhall I do? Doris, I'm undone.

Dor. What, raviſh'd?

Euph. No, ten times worſe! ten times worſe! Unlace me, or I ſhall ſwoon.

Dor. Unlace you? Why you are not thereabouts, I hope?

Euph. No, no; worſe ſtill; worſe than all that.

Dor. Nay, then 'tis bad indeed. [Dor. *unlaces her.* There: How d'ye do now.

Euph. So; 'tis going over.

Dor. Courage, pluck up your ſpirits: well; now what's the matter?

Euph. The matter! Thou ſhalt hear. Know that—— that cheat—Eſop———

Dor. Like enough; ſpeak: what has he done? That ugly ill-boding Cyclops.

Euph. Why inſtead of keeping his promiſe, and ſpeaking for Oronces; he has not ſaid one word, but what has been for himſelf. And by my father's order before to-morrow noon he's to marry me.

Dor. He marry you!———

Euph. Am I in the wrong to be in this deſpair? Tell me, Doris, if I am to blame?

Dor. To blame? No, by my troth. That ugly, old, treacherous piece of vermin: that melancholy mixture of impotence and deſire: does his mouth ſtand to a young partridge: ah the old goat. And your father! He downright doats at laſt then.

Euph. Ah, Doris; what a husband does he give me? And what a lover does he rob me of? Thou know'ſt 'em both; think of Oronces, and think of Eſop.

Dor. Spitting.] A foul monſter. And yet now I think

on't, I'm almoſt as angry at t'other too: methinks he makes but a ſlow voyage on't for a man in love: 'tis now above two months ſince he went to Lesbos, to pack up the old bones of his dead father; ſure he might have made a little more haſte.

Enter Oronces.

Euph. Oh! my heart; what do I ſee?

Dor. Talk of the devil, and he's at your elbow.

Or. My dear ſoul. [Euph. *runs and leaps about his neck.*

Euph. Why wou'd you ſtay ſo long from me?

Or. 'Twas not my fault indeed; the winds———

Dor. The winds! will the winds blow you your miſtreſs again? we have had winds too, and waves into the bargain, ſtorms and tempeſts, ſea-monſters, and the devil and all. She ſtruggled as long as ſhe cou'd, but a woman can do no more than ſhe can do; when her breath was gone, down ſhe ſunk.

Or. What's the meaning of all this?

Dor. There's meaning and mumping too:
Your miſtreſs is married; that's all.

Or. Death and furies——

Euph. clinging about him.] Don't you frighten him too much neither, Doris,
No, my dear, I'm not yet executed, tho I'm condemn'd.

Or. Condemn'd? to what? ſpeak! quick!

Dor. To be married.

Or. Married? when? how? where? to what? to whom?

Dor. Eſop, Eſop, Eſop, Eſop, Eſop.

Or. Fiends and ſpectres! what! that piece of deformity! that monſter! that crump!

Dor. The ſame, Sir, the ſame. I find he knows him. You might have come home ſooner.

Or. Dear Euphronia, eaſe me from my pain. Swear
That you neither have nor will conſent.
I know this comes from your ambitious father;
But you're too generous, too true to leave me:
Millions of kingdoms ne'er wou'd ſhake my faith,
And I believe your conſtancy as firm.

Euph. You do me juſtice, you ſhall find you do: for racks and tortures, crowns and ſceptres join'd, ſhall nei-

ther fright me from my truth, nor tempt me to be falſe. On this you may depend.

Dor. Wou'd to the Lord you wou'd find ſome other place to make your fine ſpeeches in. Don't you know that your dear friend Eſop's coming to receive his viſits here?

In this great downy chair, your pretty little husband elect is to ſit and hear all the complaints of the town: one of wiſdom's chief recompences, being to be conſtantly troubled with the buſineſs of fools.

Pray, madam, will you take the gentleman by the hand, and lead him into your chamber; and when you are there, don't lie whining, and crying, and ſighing, and wiſhing——

Aſide.] If he had not been more modeſt than wiſe, he might have ſet ſuch a mark upon the goods before now, that ne'er a merchant of 'em all wou'd have bought 'em out of his hands. But young fellows are always in the wrong: either ſo impudent they are nauſeous, or ſo modeſt they are uſeleſs.

Go, pray get you gone together.

Euph. But if my father catch us, we are ruin'd.

Dor. By my conſcience this love will make us all turn fools. Before your father can open the door, can't he ſlip down the back-ſtairs? I'm ſure he may, if you don't hold him; but that's the old trade. Ah——well, get you gone however——hark——I hear the old baboon cough; away! [*Ex.* Or. *and* Euph. *running.*

Here he comes with his ugly beak before him. Ah——a luſcious bedfellow, by my troth!

Enter Learchus *and* Eſop.

Lear. Well, Doris; what news from my daughter? is ſhe prudent?

Dor. Yes, very prudent.

Lear. What ſays ſhe? what does ſhe do?

Dor. Do? what ſhou'd ſhe do? tears her cornet; bites her thumbs; throws her fan in the fire; thinks it's dark night at noon-day; dreams of monſters and hobgoblins; raves in her ſleep of forc'd marriage and cuckoldom: cries, *avaunt* deformity; then wakens a ſudden, with fifty

arguments at her fingers ends, to prove the lawfulneſs of rebellion in a child, when a parent turns tyrant.

Lear. Very fine! but all this ſhan't ſerve her turn. I have ſaid the word, and will be obey'd——— My lord does her honour.

Dor. aſide.] Yes, and that's all he can do to her.

To Lear.] But I can't blame the gentleman after all; he loves my miſtreſs, becauſe ſhe's handſome; and ſhe hates him, becauſe ſhe's ugly. I never ſaw two people more in the right in my life.

To Eſop.] You'll pardon me, Sir, I'm ſomewhat free.

Eſop. Why, a ceremony wou'd but take up time. But, governor, methinks I have an admirable advocate about your daughter.

Lear. Out of the room, impudence: be gone, I ſay.

Dor. So I will: but you'll be as much in the wrong when I'm gone, as when I'm here. And your conſcience, I hope, will talk as pertly to you as I can do.

Eſop. If ſhe treats me thus before my face, I may conclude I'm finely handled behind my back.

Dor. I ſay the truth here; and I can ſay no worſe any where. [*Exit* Doris.

Lear. I hope your lordſhip won't be concern'd at what this pratling wench bleats out; my daughter will be govern'd, ſhe's bred up to obedience. There may be ſome ſmall difficulty in weaning her from her young lover: but 'twon't be the firſt time ſhe has been wean'd from a breaſt, my lord.

Eſop. Does ſhe love him fondly, Sir?

Lear. Fooliſhly, my lord.

Eſop. And he her?

Lear. The ſame.

Eſop. Is he young?

Lear. Yes, and vigorous.

Eſop. Rich?

Lear. So, ſo.

Eſop. Well-born.

Lear. He has good blood in his veins.

Eſop. Has he wit?

Lear. He had, before he was in love.

Eſop. And handſome with all this?

Lear. Or elſe we ſhou'd not have half ſo much trouble with him.

Eſop. Why do you then make her quit him for me? all the world knows I am neither young, noble, nor rich: and as for my beauty——look you, governor, I'm honeſt. But when children cry, they tell 'em Eſop's a coming. Pray, Sir, what is it makes you ſo earneſt to force your daughter?

Lear. Am I then to count for nothing the favour you are in at court? father-in-law to the great Eſop! what may not I aſpire to? my fooliſh daughter perhaps mayn't be ſo well pleas'd with't, but we wiſe parents uſually weigh our children's happineſs in the ſcale of our own inclinations.

Eſop. Well, governor, let it be your care then to make her conſent.

Lear. This moment, my lord, I reduce her either to obedience, or to duſt and aſhes. [*Exit* Lear.

Eſop. Adieu. Now let in the people
Who come for audience.

[Eſop *ſits in his chair, reading of papers.*

Enter two ordinary tradeſmen.

1 *Tra.* There he is, neighbour: do but look at him.

2 *Tra.* Ay; one may know him: he's well mark'd. But do'ſt hear me? what title muſt we give him? for if we fail in that point, d'ye ſee me, we ſhall never get our buſineſs done. Courtiers love titles almoſt as well as they do money, and that's a bold word now.

1 *Tra.* Why I think we had beſt call him, his grandeur.

2 *Tra.* That will do; thou haſt hit on't. Hold ſtill, let me ſpeak. May it pleaſe your grandeur——

Eſop. There I interrupt you, friend, I have a weak body that will ne'er be able to bear that title.

2 *Tra.* D'ye hear that, neighbour? what ſhall we call him now?

1 *Tra.* Why, call him, call him, his excellency: try what that will do.

2 *Tra.* May it pleaſe your excellency——

Eſop. Excellency's a long word, it takes up too much time in buſineſs: tell me what you'd have in few words.

2 *Tra.* Neighbour, this man will never give
Ten thouſand pounds to be made a lord.
But what ſhall I ſay to him now?
He puts me quite out of my play.

1 *Tra.* Why e'en talk to him as we do to one another.

2 *Tra.* Shall I? why ſo I will then, Hem! neighbour;
We want a new governor, neighbour.

Eſop. A new governor, friend?

2 *Tra.* Ay, friend.

Eſop. Why what's the matter with your old one?

2 *Tra.* What's the matter!
Why he grows rich; that's the matter:
And he that's rich can't be innocent; that's all.

Eſop. Does he uſe any of you harſhly?
Or puniſh you without a fault?

2 *Tra.* No, but he grows as rich as a miſer;
His purſe is ſo cram'd, it's ready to burſt again.

Eſop. When 'tis full 'twill hold no more;
A new governor will have an empty one.

2 *Tra.* 'For gad, neighbour, the little gentleman's in the right on't.

1 *Tra.* Why truly I don't know but he may:
For now it comes in my head,
It coſt me more money to fat my hog,
Than to keep him fat when he was ſo.
Prithee tell him we'll keep our old governor.

2 *Tra.* I'll do't. Why, look you, Sir, d'ye ſee me; having ſeriouſly conſider'd of the matter,
My neighbour Hobſon, and I here, we are content to jog on a little longer with him we have; but if you'd do us another courteſy, you might.

Eſop. What's that, friend?

2 *Tra.* Why that's this: our king Croeſus is a very good prince, as a man may ſay: but——a——but——taxes are high, an't pleaſe you; and——a——poor men want money, d'ye ſee me: it's very hard, as we think, that the poor ſhou'd work to maintain the rich. If there were no taxes, we ſhou'd do pretty well.

1 *Tra.* Taxes indeed are very burdenſome.

Eſop. I'll tell you a ſtory, countrymen.

Once on a time, the hands and feet,
As mutineers, grew mighty great;
They met, caball'd, and talk't of treaſon,
They ſwore by Jove they knew no reaſon
The belly ſhou'd have all the meat,
It was a damn'd notorious cheat,
They did the work, and—death and hell, they'd eat.

The belly who ador'd good cheer,
Had like t'have dy'd away for fear:
Quoth he, good folks, you little know
What 'tis you are about to do;
If I am ſtarv'd, what will become of you?
We neither know nor care, cry'd they,
But this we will be bold to ſay,
We'll ſee you damn'd
Before we'll work,
And you receive the pay.

With that the hands to pocket went
Full wriſt-band deep,
The legs and feet fell faſt aſleep:
Their liberty they had redeem'd,
And all, except the belly, ſeem'd
Extremely well content.

But mark what follow'd; 'twas not long
Before the right became the wrong,
The mutineers were grown ſo weak,
They found 'twas more than time to ſqueak:
They call for work, but 'twas too late.
The ſtomach (like an aged maid,
Shrunk up, for want of human aid)
The common debt of nature paid,
And with its deſtiny entrain'd their fate.

Eſop. What think you of the ſtory, friends, ha? Come, you look like wiſe men; I'm ſure you underſtand what's for your good; in giving part of what you have, you ſecure all the reſt: if the king had no money, there cou'd be no army; and if there were no army, your ene-

mies wou'd be amongſt you: one day's pillage wou'd be worſe than twenty years taxes! what ſay ye? is't not ſo?

2 *Tra.* By my troth I think he's in the right on't again.
Who'd think that little hump-back of his
Shou'd have ſo much brains in't, neighbour?

Eſop. Well, honeſt men, is there any thing elſe that I can ſerve you in?

1 *Tra.* D'ye hear that, Humphry?———why that was civil now.
But courtiers ſeldom want good-breeding;
Let's give the devil his due.
Why, to tell you the truth, honeſt gentleman, we had a whole budget full of grievances to complain of. But I think———a———ha, neighbour?
We had e'en as good let 'em alone.

1 *Tra.* Why good feath I think ſo too; for by all I can ſee, we are like to make no great hond on't. Beſides, between thee and me, I begin to daubt, whether aur grievances do us ſuch a plaguy deal of miſchief as we fanſy.

2 *Tra.* Or put caſe they did, Humphry; I'ſe afraid, he that goes to a courtier, in hope to get fairly rid of 'em, may be ſaid, (in aur country dialect) to take the wrong ſow by the ear. But here's neighbour Roger, he's a wit, let's leave him to him. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Roger, *a country bumpkin, looks ſeriouſly upon* Eſop; *then burſts out a laughing.*

Rog. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha: did ever mon behold the like? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Eſop. Haſt thou any buſineſs with me, friend?

Rog. Yes, by my troth, have I;
But if Roger were to be hang'd up for't,
Look you now, he cou'd not hold laughing:
What I have in my mind, out it comes: but bar that;
I'ſe on honeſt lad as well as another.

Eſop. My time's dearer to me than yours, friend;
Have you any thing to ſay to me?

Rog. Gadſwookers, do people uſe to ask for folks when they have nothing to ſay to 'em?
I'ſe tell you my buſineſs.

Eſop. Let's hear it.

Rog. I have, as you ſee, a little wit.

Eſop. True.

Rog. I live in a village hard by, and I'ſe the beſt man in it, tho I ſay it that ſhou'd not ſay it. I have good drink in my cellar, and good corn in my barn; I have cows and oxen, hogs and ſheep, cocks and hens, and geeſe and turkeys: but the truth will out, and ſo let it out. I'ſe e'en tired of being call'd plain Roger. I has a leathern purſe, and in that purſe there's many a fair half-crown, with the king's ſweet face upon it, God bleſs him; and with this money I have a mind to bind myſelf prentice to a courtier: it's a good trade, as I have heard ſay; there's money ſtirring: let a lad be but diligent, and to do what he's bid, he ſhall be let into the ſecret, and ſhare part of the profits; I have not lived to theſe years for nothing: thoſe that will ſwim muſt go into deep water: I'ſe geat our wife Joan to be the queen's chamber-maid; and then——crack ſays me I; and forget all my acquaintance.

But to come to the buſineſs. You who are the king's great favourite, I deſire you'd be pleas'd to ſell me ſome of your friendſhip, that I may get a court-place. Come, you ſhall chuſe me one yourſelf; you look like a ſhrewd man; by the maſs you do.

Eſop. I chuſe thee a place!

Rog. Yes: I would willingly have it ſuch a ſort of a place, as wou'd coſt little, and bring in a great deal; in a word, much profit, and nothing to do.

Eſop. But you muſt name what poſt you think wou'd ſuit your humour.

Rog. Why I'ſe pratty indifferent as to that: ſecretary of ſtate, or butler; twenty ſhillings more, twenty ſhillings leſs, is not the thing I ſtand upon. I'ſe no hagler, God-ſwookers; and he that ſays I am————zbud he lies: there's my humour now.

Eſop. But hark you, friend, you ſay you are well as you are, why then do you deſire to change?

Rog. Why what a queſtion now is there for a man of your parts? I'm well, d'ye ſee me: and what of all that? I deſire to be better: there's an anſwer for you. [*Aſide.*] Let Roger alone with him.

Eſop. Very well: this is reaſoning; and I love a man

ſhou'd reaſon with me. But let us enquire a little whether your reaſons are good or not. You ſay at home you want for nothing.

Rog. Nothing, 'for George.

Eſop. You have good drink?

Rog. 'Zbud the beſt i'th' pariſh. [*Singing.*] And dawne it merrily goes my lad, and dawne it merrily goes.

Eſop. You eat heartily?

Rog. I have a noble ſtomach.

Eſop. You ſleep well?

Rog. Juſt as I drink, till I can ſleep no longer.

Eſop. You have ſome honeſt neighbours?

Rog. Honeſt! 'zbud we are all ſo, the tawne raund, we live like breether, when one can ſerve another, he does it with all his heart and guts; when we have any thing that's good, we eat it together, holydays and ſundays we play at nine-pins, tumble upon the graſs with wholeſome young maids, laugh till we ſplit, daunce till we are weary, eat till we burſt, drink till we are ſleepy, then ſwap into bed, and ſnore till we riſe to breakfaſt.

Eſop. And all this thou wou'd'ſt leave to go to court. I'll tell thee what once happen'd?

A mouſe, who long had liv'd at court,
(Yet ne'er the better Chriſtian for't)
Walking one day to ſee ſome country ſport,
He met a home-bred village mouſe.
Who with an aukward ſpeech and bow,
That ſavour'd much of cart and plow,
Made a ſhift, I know not how,
T' invite him to his houſe,
Quoth he, my lord, I doubt you'll find
Our country fare of homely kind;
But by my troth, you're welcome to't,
Y'ave that, and bread, and cheeſe to boot:
And ſo they ſat and din'd.

Rog. Very well.

Eſop. *The courtier cou'd have eat at leaſt*
As much as any houſhold prieſt,
But thought himſelf oblig'd in feeding,
To ſhew the difference of town-breeding;

He pick'd and cull'd, and turn'd the meat,
He champt and chew'd, and cou'd not eat:
No toothleſs woman at fourſcore,
Was ever ſeen to mumble more.
He made a thouſand ugly faces,
Which (as ſometimes in ladies caſes,)
Were all deſign'd for airs and graces.
Rog. Ha, ha.
Eſop. *At laſt he from the table roſe,*
He pick'd his teeth, and blow'd his noſe,
And with an eaſy negligence,
As tho he lately came from France,
He made a careleſs ſliding bow:
'Fore Gad, quoth he, I don't know how
I ſhall return your friendly treat;
But if you'll take a bit of meat
In town with me,
You there ſhall ſee
How we poor courtiers eat.
Rog. Tit for tat; that was friendly.
Eſop. *There needed no more invitation*
To e'er a country ſquire i'th' nation:
Exactly to the time he came,
Punctual as woman when ſhe meets
A man between a pair of ſheets,
As good a ſtomach, and as little ſhame:
Rog. Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho.
Eſop. *To ſay the truth, he found good cheer,*
With wine, inſtead of ale and beer:
But juſt as they ſat down to eat,
Comes bouncing in a hungry cat.
Rog. O Lord, O Lord, O Lord.
Eſop. *The nimble courtier skipt from table,*
The ſquire leapt too, as he was able:
It can't be ſaid that they were beat,
It was no more than a retreat;
Which when an army, not to fight
By day-light, runs away by night,
Was ever judg'd a great and glorious feat.
Rog. Ever, ever, ever.

Eſop. *The cat retir'd, our gueſts return,*
The danger paſt becomes their ſcorn,
They fall to eating as before,
The butler rumbles at the door.
Rog. Good Lord!
Eſop. *To boot and ſaddle again they ſound.*
Rog. Ta ra, tan tan ta ra, ra ra tan ta ra.
Eſop. *They frown, as they wou'd ſtand their ground,*
But (like ſome of our friends) they found
'Twas ſafer much to ſcour.
Rog. Tantive, tantive tantive, &c.
Eſop. *At length the ſquire, who hated arms,*
Was ſo perplext with theſe alarms,
He roſe up in a kind of heat:
Uaſwooks, quoth he, with all your meat,
I will maintain, a diſh of peaſe,
A radiſh, and a ſlice of cheeſe,
With a good deſert of eaſe,
Is much a better treat.
However,
Since every man ſhou'd have his due,
I own, Sir, I'm oblig'd to you
For your intentions at your board:
But pox upon your courtly crew——

Rog. Amen, I pray the lord. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! now the de'el cuckold me if this ſtory be not worth a ſermon. Give me your hond, Sir.

——— If it had not been for your friendly advice, I was going to be fool enough, to be ſecretary of ſtate.

Eſop. Well, go thy ways home, and be wiſer for the future.

Rog. And ſo I will: for that ſame mauſe, your friend, was a witty perſon, Gadsbudlikins; and ſo our wife Joan ſhall know: for between you and I, 'tis ſhe has put me upon going to court. Sir, ſhe has been ſo praud, ſo ſaucy, ſo rampant, ever ſince I brought her home a lac'd pinner, and a pink-colour'd pair of ſhoe-ſtrings, from Tickle-downe fair, the parſon o'th' pariſh can't rule her; and that you'll ſay's much. But ſo much for that. Naw I thank you for your good counſel, honeſt little gentleman;

and to ſhew you that I'ſe not ungrateful——give me your hond once more——if you'll take the pains but to walk dawne to our towne—a word in your ear—— I'ſe ſend you ſo drunk home again, you ſhall remember friendly Roger as long as you have any breath in your body. [*Exit* Roger.

Eſop *ſolus.*

Farewel, what I both envy and deſpiſe:
Thy happineſs and ignorance provoke me.
How noble were the thing call'd knowledge,
Did it but lead us to a bleſs like thine!
But their's a ſecret curſe in wiſdom's train,
Which on its pleaſures ſtamps perpetual pain,
And makes the wiſe man loſer by his gain.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

Enter Eſop.

Eſop. WHO waits there? [*Enter Servant.*
If there be any body that has buſineſs with me, let 'em in.

Ser. Yes, Sir. [*Exit Serv.*

Enter Quaint, *who ſtands at a diſtance, making a great many fawning bows.*

Eſop. Well, friend, who are you?

Quaint. My name's Quaint, Sir, the profoundeſt of all your honour's humble ſervants.

Eſop. And what may your buſineſs be with me, Sir?

Quaint. My buſineſs, Sir, with every man, is firſt of all to do him ſervice.

Eſop. And your next is, I ſuppoſe, to be paid for't twice as much as 'tis worth.

Quaint. Your honour's moſt obedient, humble ſervant.

Eſop. Well, Sir, but upon what account am I going to be oblig'd to you?

Quaint. Sir, I'm a genealogiſt.

Eſop. A genealogiſt!

Quaint. At your ſervice, Sir.

Eſop. So, Sir.

Quaint. Sir, I am inform'd from common fame, as well as from ſome little private familiar intelligence, that your wiſdom is entring into treaty with the *Primum Mobile* of good and evil, a fine lady. I have travell'd, Sir; I have read, Sir; I have conſider'd, Sir; and I find, Sir, that the nature of a fine lady is to be ——a fine lady, Sir; a fine lady's a fine lady, Sir, all the world over; ſhe loves a fine houſe, fine furniture, fine clothes, fine liveries, fine petticoats, fine ſmocks; and if ſhe ſtops there——ſhe's a fine lady indeed, Sir. But to come to my point.

It being the Lydian cuſtom, that the fair bride ſhould be preſented on her wedding-day with ſomething that may ſignify the merit and the worth of her dread lord and maſter, I thought the noble Eſop's pedigree might be the welcom'ſt gift that he could offer. If his honour be of the ſame opinion ——I'll ſpeak a bold word; there's ne'er a herald in all Aſia ſhall put better blood in his veins, than——Sir, your humble ſervant, Jacob Quaint.

Eſop. Doſt thou then know my father, friend? for I proteſt to thee I am a ſtranger to him.

Quaint. Your father, Sir, ha, ha! I know every man's father, Sir, and every man's grandfather, and every man's great grandfather. Why, Sir, I'm a herald by nature, my mother was a Welſhwoman.

Eſop. A Welſhwoman? prithee of what country's that?

Quaint. That Sir, is a country in the world's backſide, where every man is born a gentleman, and a genealogiſt. Sir, I cou'd tell my mother's pedigree before I could ſpeak plain; which, to ſhew you the depth of my art, and the ſtrength of my memory, I'll trundle you down in an inſtant.

Noah had three ſons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; Shem—

Eſop. Hold, I conjure thee in the name of all thy anceſtors.

Quaint. Sir, I cou'd take it higher, but I begin at Noah for brevity's ſake.

Eſop. No more on't, I intreat thee.

Quaint. Your honour's impatient, perhaps, to hear your own deſcent. *A word to the wiſe is enough.* Hem, hem: Solomon, the wiſe king of Judea——

Eſop. Hold once more!

Quaint. Ha, ha; your honour's modeſt, but——— Solomon the wiſe king of Judea———

Eſop. Was my anceſtor, was he not?

Quaint. He was, my lord, which no one ſure can doubt, who obſerves how much of prince there hangs about you.

Eſop. What! is't in my mien!

Quaint. You have ſomething———wondrous noble in your air.

Eſop. Perſonable too; view me well.

Quaint. N———not tall; but majeſtic.

Eſop. My ſhape.

Quaint. A world of ſymmetry in it.

Eſop. The lump upon my back.

Quaint. N——— not regular; but agreeable.

Eſop. Now by my honeſty thou art a villain, herald. But flattery's a thruſt I never fail to parry. 'Tis a paſs thou ſhould'ſt reſerve for young fencers, with feints like thoſe they're to be hit: I do not doubt but thou haſt found it ſo; haſt not?

Quaint. I muſt confeſs, Sir, I have ſometimes made 'em bleed by't. But I hope your honour will pleaſe to excuſe me, ſince, to ſpeak the truth, I get my bread by't, and maintain my wife and children: and induſtry, you know, Sir, is a commendable thing. Beſides, Sir, I have debated the buſineſs a little with my conſcience; for I'm like the reſt of my neighbours, I'd willingly get money, and be ſav'd too, if the thing may be done upon any reaſonable terms: and ſo, Sir, I ſay, to quiet my conſcience, I have found out at laſt, that flattery is a duty.

Eſop. A duty!

Quaint. Ay, Sir, a duty: for the duty of all men is to make one another paſs their time as pleaſantly as they can. Now, Sir, here's a young lord, who has a great deal of land, a great deal of title, a great deal of meat, a great deal of noiſe, a great many ſervants, and a great many diſeaſes. I find him very dull, very reſtleſs, tir'd with eaſe, cloy'd with plenty, a burden to himſelf, and a plague to his family. I begin to flatter: he ſprings off of the couch; turns himſelf round in the glaſs; finds all I ſay true; cuts a caper a yard high; his blood trickles round his veins; his heart's as light as his heels; and before I leave him—

his purſe is as empty as his head. So we are both content; for we part much happier than we met.

Eſop. Admirable rogue! what doſt thou think of murder and of rape, are not they duties too? wer't not for ſuch vile fawning things as thou art, young nobles wou'd not long be what they are: they'd grow aſham'd of luxury and eaſe, and rouſe up the old ſpirit of their fathers; leave the purſuit of a poor frightened hare, and make their foes to tremble in their ſtead; furniſh their heads with ſciences and arts, and fill their hearts with honour, truth and friendſhip: be generous to ſome, and juſt to all; drive home their creditors with bags of gold, inſtead of chaſing 'em away with ſwords and ſtaves; be faithful to their king and country both, and ſtab the offerer of a bribe from either; bluſh even at a wandering thought of vice, and boldly own they durſt be friends to virtue; trembling at nothing but the frowns of Heaven, and be no more aſham'd of him that made 'em.

Quaint aſide.] If I ſtand to hear this crump preach a little longer, I ſhall be fool enough perhaps to be bubbled out of my livelihood, and ſo loſe a bird in the hand for two in the buſh.

Sir, ſince I have not been able to bring you to a good opinion of yourſelf, 'tis very probable I ſhall ſcarce prevail with you to have one of me. But if you pleaſe to do me the favour to forget me, I ſhall ever acknowledge myſelf——————Sir, your moſt obedient, faithful, humble ſervant.

Eſop. Hold; if I let thee go, and give thee nothing, thou'lt be apt to grumble at me; and therefore——— who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Quaint aſide.] I don't like his looks, by Gad.

Eſop. I'll preſent thee with a token of my love.

Quaint. A——another time, Sir, will do as well.

Eſop. No; I love to be out of debt, tho 'tis being out of the faſhion. So, d'ye hear! give this honeſt gentleman half a ſcore good ſtrokes on the back with a cudgel.

Quaint. By no means in the world, Sir.

Eſop. Indeed, Sir, you ſhall take 'em.

Quaint. Sir, I don't merit half your bounty.

Eſop. O 'tis but a trifle.

Quaint. Your generoſity makes me bluſh.

[*Looking about to make his eſcape.*

Eſop. That's your modeſty, Sir.

Quaint. Sir, you are pleaſed to compliment. But a—— twenty pedigrees for a clear coaſt.

[*Running off, the ſervant after him.*

Eſop. Wait upon him down ſtairs, fellow; I'd do't myſelf, were I but nimble enough; but he makes haſte, to avoid ceremony.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, here's a lady in great haſte, deſires to ſpeak with you.

Eſop. Let her come in.

Enter Aminta, *weeping.*

Amin. O Sir, if you don't help me, I'm undone.

Eſop. What, what's the matter, lady?

Amin. My daughter, Sir, my daughter's run away with a filthy fellow.

Eſop. A ſlippery trick indeed!

Amin. For Heaven's ſake, Sir, ſend immediately to purſue 'em, and ſeize 'em: but 'tis in vain, 'twill be too late, 'twill be too late; I'll warrant at this very moment they are got together in a room with a couch in't; all's gone, all's gone; tho 'twere made of gold 'tis loſt: Oh! my honour, my honour. A forward girl ſhe was always; I ſaw it in her eyes the very day of her birth.

Eſop. That indeed was early; but how do you know ſhe's gone with a fellow?

Amin. I have e'en her own inſolent hand writing for't: Sir, take but the pains to read what a letter ſhe has left me.

Eſop *reads.*

I love and am belov'd, and that's the reaſon I run away.

Short, but ſignificant!

——*I'm ſure there's no body knows better than your ladyſhip what allowances are to be made to fleſh and blood; I therefore hope this from your juſtice, that what you have done three times yourſelf, you'll pardon once in your daughter.*

The dickens!

Amin. Now, Sir, what do you think of the buſineſs?

Eſop. Why truly, lady, I think it one of the moſt natural buſineſſes I have met with a great while. I'll tell you a ſtory.

A crab-fiſh once her daughter told,
(In terms that ſavour'd much of ſcold)
She cou'd not bear to ſee her go,
Sidle, ſidle, to and fro;
The devil's in the wench, quoth ſhe,
When ſo much money has been paid,
To poliſh you like me;
It makes me almoſt mad to ſee
Y'are ſtill ſo awkard, an ungainly jade.
Her daughter ſmil'd, and look'd a-skew,
She anſwer'd (for to give her her due)
Pertly, as moſt folks daughters do:
Madam, your ladyſhip, quoth ſhe,
Is pleas'd to blame in me
What, on enquiry, you may find,
Admits a paſſable excuſe,
From a proverb much in uſe,
That cat will after kind.

Amin. Sir, I took you to be a man better bred, than to liken a lady to a crab-fiſh.

Eſop. What I want in good-breeding, lady, I have in truth and honeſty: as what you have wanted in virtue, you have had in a good face.

Amint. Have had, Sir! what I have had, I have ſtill; and ſhall have a great while, I hope. I'm no grandmother, Sir.

Eſop. But in a fair way for't, madam.

Amin. Thanks to my daughter's forwardneſs then, not my years. I'd have you to know, Sir, I have never a wrinkle in my face. A young pert ſlut! who'd think ſhe ſhou'd know ſo much at her age?

Eſop. Good maſters make quick ſcholars, lady; ſhe has learn'd her exerciſe from you.

Amint. But where's the remedy, Sir?

Eſop. In trying if a good example will reclaim her, as

an ill one has debauch'd her. Live private, and avoid ſcandal.

Amin. Never ſpeak it; I can no more retire, than I can go to church twice of a Sunday.

Eſop. What, your youthful blood boils in your veins, I'll warrant?

Amin. I have warmth enough to endure the air, old gentleman. I need not ſhut myſelf up in a houſe theſe twenty years.

Eſop *aſide.*] She takes a long leaſe of lewdneſs: ſhe'll be an admirable tenant to luſt.

Amin. *walking haſtily to and fro.*] People think when a woman is turn'd forty, ſhe's old enough to turn out of the world: but I ſay, when a woman is turn'd forty, ſhe's old enough to have more wit. The moſt can be ſaid is, her face is the worſe for wearing: I'll anſwer for all the reſt of her fabric. The men wou'd be to be pity'd, by my troth, wou'd they, if we ſhou'd quit the ſtage, and leave 'em nothing but a parcel of young pert ſluts, that neither know how to ſpeak ſenſe, nor keep themſelves clean. But don't let 'em fear, we a'n't going yet———how now! what left alone! an unmannerly piece of deformity! methinks he might have had ſenſe enough to have made love to me. But I have found men ſtrangely dull for the laſt ten or twelve years: ſure they'll mend in time, or the world won't be worth living in.

[Eſop *ſtares upon her, and as ſhe turns from him, runs off the ſtage.*

For let philoſophers ſay all they can,
The ſource of woman's joys is plac'd in man. [Exit.

Enter Learchus *and* Euphronia, Doris *following at a diſtance.*

Lear *to* Euph.] I muſt tell you, miſtreſs, I'm too mild with you; parents ſhou'd never intreat their children, nor will I hereafter. Therefore, in a word, let Eſop be lov'd, let Oronces be hated, let one be a peacock, let t'other be a bat; I'm father, you are daughter; I command, and you ſhall obey.

Euph. I never yet did otherwiſe; nor ſhall I now, Sir; but pray let reaſon guide you.

Lear. So it does: but 'tis my own, not yours, huſſey.

Dor. Ah——well, I'll ſay no more; but were I in her place, by the Maſs I'd have a tug for't.

Lear. Daemon, born to diſtract me. Whence art thou, in the name of fire and brimſtone? have I not ſatisfy'd thee? have I not pai'd thee what's thy due? and have not I turn'd thee out of doors, with orders never more to ſtride my threſhold, ha? anſwer, abominable ſpirit; what is't that makes thee haunt me?

Dor. A fooliſh paſſion, to do you good in ſpite of your teeth: pox on me for my zeal, I ſay.

Lear. And pox on thee and thy zeal too, I ſay.

Dor. Now if it were not for her ſake more than for yours, I'd leave all to your own management, to be reveng'd of you. But rather than I'll ſee that ſweet thing ſacrificed ——— I'll play the devil in your houſe.

Lear. Patience, I ſummon thee to my aid.

Dor. Paſſion, I defy thee; to the laſt drop of my blood I'll maintain my ground. What have you to charge me with? ſpeak: I love your child better than you do, and you can't bear that, ha? is't not ſo? nay, it's well y'are aſham'd on't; there's ſome ſign of grace ſtill.

Look you, Sir, in few words, you'll make me mad; and 'twere enough to make any body mad (who has brains enough to be ſo) to ſee ſo much virtue ſhipwreck'd at the very port. The world never ſaw a virgin better qualify'd; ſo witty, ſo diſcreet, ſo modeſt, ſo chaſte; in a word, I brought her up myſelf, and 'twould be the death of me, to ſee ſo virtuous a maid become a lewd wife; which is the uſual effect of parents pride and covetouſneſs.

Lear. How, ſtrumpet! wou'd any thing be able to debauch my daughter?

Dor. Your daughter! yes, your daughter, and myſelf into the bargain: a woman's but a woman; and I'll lay a hundred pound on nature's ſide. Come, Sir, few words diſpatch buſineſs. Let who will be the wife of Eſop, ſhe's a fool, or he's a cuckold. But you'll never have a true notion of this matter, till you ſuppoſe yourſelf in your daughter's place. As thus:

You are a pretty, ſoft, warm, wiſhing young lady: I'm a ſtrait, proper, handſome, vigorous, young fellow.

You have a peeviſh, poſitive, covetous, old father, and

he forces you to marry a little, lean, crooked, dry, ſapleſs husband. This husband's gone abroad, you are left at home. I make you a viſit; find you all alone; the ſervant pulls to the door; the devil comes in at the window. I begin to wheedle, you begin to melt; you like my perſon, and therefore believe all I ſay; ſo firſt I make you an Atheiſt, and then I make you a whore. Thus the world goes, Sir.

Lear. Pernicious peſtilence! has not thy eternal tongue run down its larum yet?

Dor. Yes.

Lear. Then go out of my houſe, abomination.

Dor. I'll not ſtir a foot.

Lear. Who waits there? bring me my great ſtick.

Dor. Bring you a ſtick! bring you a head-piece: that you'd call for, if you knew your own wants.

Lear. Death and furies, the devil, and ſo forth; I ſhall run diſtracted.

Euph. Pray, Sir, don't be ſo angry at her. I'm ſure ſhe means well, tho ſhe may have an odd way of expreſſing herſelf.

Lear. What, you like her meaning? who doubts it, offſpring of Venus? but I'll make you ſtay your ſtomach with meat of my chuſing, you liquoriſh young baggage you. In a word, Eſop's the man; and to-morrow he ſhall be your lord and maſter.

But ſince he can't be ſatisfied unleſs he has your heart, as well as all the reſt of your trumpery, let me ſee you receive him in ſuch a manner that he may think himſelf your choice as well as mine; 'twill make him eſteem your judgment: for we uſually gueſs at other people's underſtandings, by their approving our actions and liking our faces. See here the great man comes! [*To* Dor.] Follow me, inſolence; and leave 'em to expreſs their paſſion to each other. [*To* Euph.] Remember my laſt word to you is, obey.

Dor. *to* Euph. *aſide.*] And remember my laſt advice to you is, rebel. [*Exit* Lear. Dor. *following him.*

Euph. Alas, I'm good-natured; the laſt thing that's ſaid to me uſually leaves the deepeſt impreſſion.

Enter Eſop; *they ſtand ſome time without ſpeaking.*

Eſop.———They ſay, that lovers, for want of words, have eyes to ſpeak with. I'm afraid you do not underſtand the language of mine, ſince yours I find, will make no anſwer to 'em. But I muſt tell you, lady, there is a numerous train of youthful virgins, that are endow'd with wealth and beauty too, who yet have thought it worth their pains and care to point their darts at Eſop's homely breaſt; whilſt you ſo much contemn what they purſue, that a young ſenſeleſs fop's preferr'd before me.

Euph. Did you but know that fop you dare to term ſo, his very looks wou'd fright you into nothing.

Eſop. A very bauble.

Euph. How!

Eſop. A butterfly.

Euph. I can't bear it.

Eſop. A parroquet, can prattle and look gaudy.

Euph. It may be ſo; but let me paint him and you in your proper colours, I'll do it exactly, and you ſhall judge which I ought to chuſe.

Eſop. No, hold; I'm naturally not over-curious; beſides, 'tis pride makes people have their pictures drawn.

Euph. Upon my word, Sir, you may have yours taken a hundred times before any body will believe 'tis done upon that account.

Eſop *aſide.*] How ſevere ſhe is upon me!
You are reſolv'd then to perſiſt, and be fond of your feather; ſigh for a perriwig, and die for a cravat-ſtring.

Euph. Methinks, Sir, you might treat with more reſpect what I've thought fit to own I value; your affronts to him are doubly ſuch to me; if you continue your provoking language, you muſt expect my tongue will ſally too; and if you are as wiſe as ſome would make you, you can't but know I ſhou'd have theme enough?

Eſop. But is it poſſible you can love ſo much as you pretend?

Euph. Why do you queſtion it?

Eſop. Becauſe no body loves ſo much as they pretend: but hark you, young lady, marriage is to laſt a long, long time; and where one couple bleſs the ſacred knot, a train of wretches curſe the inſtitution. You are in an age where

hearts are young and tender, a pleaſing object gets admittance ſoon. But ſince to marriage there's annex'd this dreadful word, *for ever*, the following example ought to move you.

A peacock once of ſplendid ſhow,
Gay, gawdy, foppiſh, vain——a beau,
Attack'd a fond young pheaſant's heart
With ſuch ſucceſs,
He pleas'd her, tho' he made her ſmart;
He pierc'd her with ſo much addreſs,
She ſmil'd the moment that he fix'd his dart.
A cuckow in a neighbouring tree,
Rich, honeſt, ugly, old——like me,
Lov'd her as he lov'd his life:
No pamper'd prieſt e'er ſtudy'd more
To make a virtuous nun a whore,
Than he to get her for his wife,
But all his offers ſtill were vain,
His limbs were weak, his face was plain;
Beauty, youth, and vigour weigh'd
With the warm deſiring maid:
No bird ſhe cry'd, wou'd ſerve her turn,
But what cou'd quench as well as burn,
She'd have a young gallant; ſo one ſhe had.
But ere a month was come and gone,
The bird began to change her tone,
She found a young gallant was an inconſtant one.
She wander'd to a neighbouring grove,
Where after muſing long on love,
She told her confident, ſhe found
When for one's life one muſt be bound,
(Tho youth indeed was a delicious bait)
An aged husband, rich, tho plain,
Wou'd give a ſlaviſh wife leſs pain;
And what was more, was ſooner ſlain,
Which was a thing of weight.

Behold, young lady, here, the cuckow of the fable; I'm deform'd 'tis true, yet I have found the means to make a figure amongſt men, that well has recompens'd the

wrongs of nature; my rival's beauty promiſes you much; perhaps my homely form might yield you more; at leaſt conſider on't; 'tis worth your thought.

Euph. I muſt confeſs, my fortune wou'd be greater;
But what's a fortune to a heart like mine?
'Tis true, I'm but a young philoſopher,
Yet in that little ſpace my glaſs has run,
I've ſpent ſome time in ſearch of happineſs:
The fond purſuit I ſoon obſerv'd of riches,
Inclin'd me to enquire into their worth:
I found their value was not in themſelves,
But in their power to grant what we cou'd ask.
I then proceeded to my own deſires,
To know what ſtate of life wou'd ſuit with them:
I found 'em moderate in their demands,
They neither ask'd for title, ſtate, nor power;
They ſlighted the aſpiring poſt of envy:
'Tis true, they trembled at the name contempt;
A general eſteem was all they wiſh'd;
And that I did not doubt might be obtain'd,
If furniſh'd but with virtue and good-nature;
My fortune prov'd ſufficient to afford me
Conveniences of life, and independence.
This, Sir, was the reſult of my enquiry;
And by this ſcheme of happineſs I build,
When I prefer the man I love to you.

Eſop. How wiſe, how witty, and how cleanly, young women grow, as ſoon as ever they are in love!

Euph. How foppiſh, how impertinent, and how nauſeous are old men, when they pretend to be ſo too!

Eſop. How pert is youth!

Euph. How dull is age!

Eſop. Why ſo ſharp, young lady?

Euph. Why ſo blunt, old gentleman?

Eſop. 'Tis enough; I'll to your father, I know how to deal with him, tho I don't know how to deal with you. Before to-morrow noon, damſel, wiſe ſhall be written on your brow. [*Exit* Eſop.

Euph. Then before to morrow night, ſtateſman, huſband ſhall be ſtampt upon your forehead.

[*Exit* Euph.

ACT IV.

Enter Oronces *and* Doris.

Dor. PAtience, I beſeech you.

Or. Patience! what, and ſee that lovely creature thrown into the arms of that pedantic monſter: 'ſdeath, I'd rather ſee the world reduc'd to atoms, mankind turn'd into crawfiſh, and myſelf an old woman.

Dor. So you think an old woman a very unfortunate thing, I find; but you are miſtaken, Sir; ſhe may plague other folks, but ſhe's as entertaining to herſelf, as any one part of the creation.

Or. walking to and fro.] She's the devil,——and I'm one of the damn'd, I think. But I'll make ſomebody howl for't, I will ſo.

Dor. You'll e'en do as all the young fellows in the town do, ſpoil your own ſport: ah——had young mens ſhoulders but old courtiers heads upon 'em, what a delicious time wou'd they have on't! for ſhame be wiſe; for your miſtreſs's ſake at leaſt uſe ſome caution.

Or. For her ſake I'll reſpect, even like a deity, her father. He ſhall ſtrike me, he ſhall tread upon me, and find me humbler even than a crawling worm, for I'll not turn again; but for Eſop, that unfiniſh'd lump, that chaos of humanity, I'll uſe him,——nay, expect it, for I'll do't ——the firſt moment that I ſee him, I'll——

Dor. Not challenge him, I hope.——'Twou'd be a pretty ſight truly, to ſee Eſop drawn up in battalia: fie for ſhame, be wiſe once in your life; think of gaining time, by putting off the marriage for a day or two, and not of waging war with a pigmy. Yonder's the old gentleman walking by himſelf in the gallery; go and wheedle him, you know his weak ſide; he's good-natur'd in the bottom. Stir up his old fatherly bowels a little, I'll warrant you'll move him at laſt: go, get you gone, and play your part diſcreetly.

Or. Well, I'll try; but if words won't do with one, blows ſhall with t'other; by Heaven they ſhall. [*Exit* Or.

Dor. ſola.] Nay, I reckon we ſhall have rare work on't by and by. Shield us, kind Heaven; what things are men in love? now they are ſtocks and ſtones? then they are fire and quick-ſilver; firſt whining and crying, then ſwearing and damning: this moment they are in love, and next moment they are out of love: ah——cou'd we but live without 'em——but it's in vain to think on't.

[*Exit.*

Enter Eſop *at one ſide of the ſtage, Mrs.* Forge-will at *t'other.*

Forg. Sir, I'm your moſt devoted ſervant: what I ſay is no compliment, I do aſſure you.

Eſop. Madam, as far as you are really mine, I believe I may venture to aſſure you, I am yours.

Forg. I ſuppoſe, Sir, you know that I'm a widow.

Eſop. Madam, I don't ſo much as know you are a woman.

Forg. O ſurprizing! why I thought the whole town had known it. Sir, I have been a widow this twelvemonth.

Eſop. If a body may gueſs at your heart by your petticoat, lady, you don't deſign to be ſo a twelve-month more.

Forg. O bleſs me! not a twelve-month! why, my husband has left me four ſquawling brats. Beſides, Sir, I'm undone.

Eſop. You ſeem as chearful an undone lady as I have met with.

Forg. Alas, Sir, I have too great a ſpirit ever to let afflictions ſpoil my face. Sir, I'll tell you my condition; and that will lead me to my buſineſs with you. Sir, my husband was a ſcrivener.

Eſop. The deux he was: I thought he had been a count at leaſt.

Forg. Sir, it is not the firſt time I have been taken for a counteſs; my mother us'd to ſay as I lay in my cradle, I had the air of a woman of quality; and truly I have always liv'd like ſuch. My husband, indeed, had ſomething ſneaking in him, (as moſt husbands have, you know, Sir) but from the moment I ſet foot in his houſe, bleſs me, what a change was there! his pewter was turn'd into ſilver, his goloſhoes into a glaſs coach, and his little tra-

veling mare into a pair of Flanders horſes. Inſtead of a greaſy cook maid to wait at table, I had four tall footmen in clean linen; all things became new and faſhionable, and nothing look'd aukward in my family. My furniture was the wonder of my neighbourhood, and my clothes the admiration of the whole town; I had a necklace that was envy'd by the queen, and a pair of pendants that ſet a dutcheſs a crying. In a word, I ſaw nothing I lik'd but I bought it; and my husband, good man, durſt ne'er refuſe paying for't. Thus I liv'd, and I flouriſh'd, till he ſicken'd and dy'd; but ere he was cold in his grave, his creditors plunder'd my houſe. But what pity it was to ſee fellows with dirty ſhoes come into my beſt rooms, and touch my hangings with their filthy fingers! you won't blame me, Sir, if with all my courage I weep at this ſenſible part of my misfortune.

Eſop. A very ſad ſtory truly!

Forg. But now, Sir, to my buſineſs. Having been inform'd this morning, that the king had appointed a great ſum of money for the marriage of young women who had liv'd well, and are fallen to decay, I am come to acquaint you I have two ſtrapping daughters juſt fit for the matter, and to deſire you'll help 'em to portions out of the king's bounty; that they may'nt whine and pine, and be eaten up with the green-ſickneſs, as half the young women in the town are, or wou'd be, if there were not more helps for a diſeaſe than one. This, Sir, is my buſineſs.

Eſop. And this, madam, is my anſwer.

A crawling toad, all ſpeckled o'er,
Vain, gawdy, painted, patch'd—a whore,
Seeing a well-fed ox hard by,
Regards him with an envious eye,
And (as the poets tell)
Ye gods, I cannot bear't, quoth ſhe,
I'll burſt or be as big as he,
And ſo began to ſwell.
Her friends and kindred round her came,
They ſhew'd her ſhe was much to blame,
The thing was out of reach.

She told 'em they were buſy folk,
And when her husband wou'd have ſpoke,
She bid him kiſs her br———.
With that they all e'en gave her o'er,
And ſhe perſiſted as before,
Till with a deal of ſtrife
She ſwell'd at laſt ſo much her ſpleen,
She burſt like one that we have ſeen,
Who was a ſcrivener's wife.

This, widow, I take to be your caſe, and that of a great many others; for this is an age where moſt people get falls by clambering too high, to reach at what they ſhould not do. The ſhoemaker's wife reduces her husband to a cobler, by endeavouring to be as ſpruce as the taylor's: the taylor's brings hers to a botcher, by going as fine at the mercer's: the mercer's lowers hers to a foreman, by perking up to the merchant's: the merchant's wears hers to a broker, by ſtrutting up to quality: and quality bring theirs to nothing, by ſtriving to outdo one another. If women were humbler, men wou'd be honeſter. Pride brings want, want makes rogues, rogues come to be hang'd, and the devil alone's the gainer. Go your ways home, woman; and as your husband maintain'd you by his pen, maintain yourſelf by your needle; put your great girls to ſervice, imployment will keep 'em honeſt; much work, and plain diet, will cure the green-ſickneſs as well as an husband———

Forg. Why, you pitiful pigmy, preaching, canting, pickthank; you little, ſorry, crook'd, dry, wither'd eunuch, do you know that———

Eſop. I know that I'm ſo deform'd you han't wit enough to deſcribe me; but I have this good quality, that a fooliſh woman can never make me angry.

Forg. Can't ſhe ſo! I'll try that, I will.

[*She falls upon him, holds his hands, and boxes his ears.*

Eſop. Help, help, help.

Enter ſervants. She runs off, they after her.

Eſop. Nay e'en let her go——let her go——don't bring her back again———I'm for making a bridge of gold for

my enemy to retreat upon——— I'm quite out of breath ——a terrible woman, I proteſt.

Enter a country gentleman drunk, in a hunting dreſs, with a huntſman, groom, faulkner, and other ſervants; one leading a couple of hounds, another grey hounds, a third a ſpaniel, a fourth a gun upon his ſhoulder, the faulkner a hawk upon his fiſt, &c.

Gent. Haux, haux, haux, haux, haux: joular, there boy, joular, joular, tinker, pedlar, miſs, miſs, miſs, miſs, miſs ——— blood and oons———O there he is; that muſt he be, I have ſeen his picture, [*Reeling upon* Eſop]——Sir—— if your name's Eſop——— I'm your humble ſervant.

Eſop. Sir, my name is Eſop, at your ſervice.

Gent. Why then, Sir———compliments being paſt on both ſides, with your leave—— we'll proceed to buſineſs.

Sir, I'm by profeſſion———a gentleman of———three thouſand pounds a———year. Sir, I keep a good pack of hounds, and a good ſtable of horſes.

To his groom.] How many horſes have I, ſirrah?——Sir, this is my groom. [*Preſenting him to* Eſop.

Groom. Your worſhip has ſix coach-horſes, (cut and long-tail) two runners, half a dozen hunters, four breeding mares, and two blind ſtallions, beſides pads, routs, and dog-horſes.

Gent. Look you there, Sir, I ſcorn to tell a lye. He that queſtions my honour——— he's a ſon of a whore. But to buſineſs——— having heard, Sir, that you were come to this town, I have taken the pains to come hither too, tho I had a great deal of buſineſs upon my hands, for I have appointed three *juſtices of the peace* to hunt with 'em this morning——— and be drunk with them in the afternoon. But the main chance muſt be look'd to——— and that's this——I deſire, Sir, you'll tell the king from me———I don't like theſe taxes———in one word, as well as in twenty———I don't like theſe taxes.

Eſop. Pray, Sir, how high may you be tax'd?

Gent. How high may I be tax'd, Sir! why I may be tax'd, Sir,—four ſhillings in the pound, Sir; one half I pay in money— and t'other half I pay in perjury, Sir: hey, joular, joular, joular, haux, haux, haux, haux, haux.

Hoo, hoo———here's the beſt hound-bitch in Europe. Zoons is ſhe. And I had rather kiſs her than kiſs my wife ——rot me if I had not———but, Sir, I don't like theſe taxes.

Eſop. Why how wou'd you have the war carry'd on?

Gent. War carried on, Sir!——why, I had rather have no war carried on at all, Sir, than pay taxes. I don't deſire to be ruin'd, Sir.

Eſop. Why you ſay you have three thouſand pounds a year.

Gent. And ſo I have, Sir———Lett-Acre. Sir, this is my ſteward. How much land have I, Lett-Acre?

Lett-Acre. Your worſhip has three thauſand paunds a year, as good lond as any's i'th' caunty? and two thauſand paunds worth of wood to cut dawne at your worſhip's pleaſure, and put the money in your pocket.

Gent. Look you there, Sir, what have you to ſay to that?

Eſop. I have to ſay, Sir, that you may pay your taxes in money, inſtead of perjury, and ſtill have a better revenue than I'm afraid you deſerve. What ſervice do you do your king, Sir?

Gent. None at all, Sir—I'm above it.

Eſop. What ſervice may you do your country pray?

Gent. I'm juſtice of the peace———and captain of the militia.

Eſop. Of what uſe are you to your kindred?

Gent. I'm the head of the family, and have all the eſtate.

Eſop. What good do you do your neighbours?

Gent. I give 'em their bellies full of beef every time they come to ſee me; and make 'em ſo drunk, they ſpew it up again before they go away.

Eſop. How do you uſe your tenants?

Gent. Why, I skrew up their rents till they break and run away, and if I catch 'em again, I let 'em rot in a goal.

Eſop. How do you treat your wife?

Gent. I treat her all day with ill nature and tobacco, and all night with ſnoring and a dirty ſhirt.

Eſop. How do you breed your children?

Gent. I breed my eldeſt ſon——a fool; my youngeſt

breed themſelves, and my daughters——have no breeding at all.

Eſop. 'Tis very well, Sir, I ſhall be ſure to ſpeak to the king of you; or if you think fit to remonſtrate to him, by way of petition or addreſs, how reaſonable it may be to let men of your importance go ſcot-free, in the time of a neceſſary war, I'll deliver it in council, and ſpeak to it as I ought.

Gent. Why, Sir, I don't diſapprove your advice, but my clerk is not here, and I can't ſpell well.

Eſop. You may get it writ at your leiſure, and ſend it me. But becauſe you are not much us'd to draw up addreſſes, perhaps; I'll tell you in general what kind of one this ought to be.

May it pleaſe your majeſty——

To the Gent.] You'll excuſe me if I don't know your name and title.

Gent. Sir *Polidorus Hogſtye, of Beaſt-Hall in Swine-County.*

Eſop. Very well.

May it pleaſe your majeſty; Polydorus Hogſtye, of Beaſt-Hall in Swine-County, moſt humbly repreſents, that he hates to pay taxes, the dreadful conſequences of 'em being inevitably theſe, that he muſt retrench two diſhes in ten, where not above ſix of 'em are deſign'd for gluttony.

Four bottles out of twenty; where not above fifteen of 'em are for drunkenneſs.

Six horſes out of thirty; of which not above twenty are kept for ſtate.

And four ſervants out of a ſcore; where one half do nothing but make work for t'other.

To this deplorable condition muſt your important ſubject be reduc'd, or forc'd to cut down his timber, which he wou'd willingly perſerve againſt an ill run at dice.

And as to the neceſſity of the war for the ſecurity of the kingdom, he neither knows nor cares whether it be neceſſary or not.

He concludes with his prayers for your majeſty's life, upon condition you will protect him and his fox-hounds at Beaſt-Hall without e'er a penny of money.

To the Gent.] This, Sir, I ſuppoſe, is much what you wou'd be at.

Gent. Exactly, Sir, I'll be ſure to have one drawn up to

the ſelf ſame purpoſe; and next fox-hunting I'll engage half the company ſhall ſet their hands to't.

Sir, I am your———moſt devoted ſervant; and if you pleaſe to let me ſee you at Beaſt-Hall, here's my huntſman Houndsfoot will ſhew you a fox ſhall lead you through ſo many hedges and briars, you ſhall have no more cloaths on your back in half an hour's time——— than you had ———in the womb of your mother. Haux, haux, haux, *&c.* [*Exit ſhouting.*

Eſop. *O Tempora, O Mores!*

Enter Mr. Fruitful *and his Wife.*

Mr. *Fruit.* Heavens preſerve the noble Eſop, grant him long life and happy days.

Mrs. *Fruit.* And ſend him a fruitful wife, with a hopeful iſſue.

Eſop. And what is it I'm to do for you, good people, to make you amends for all theſe friendly wiſhes?

Mr. *Fruit.* Sir, here's myſelf and my wife———

Mrs. *Fruit.* Sir, here's I and my husband———

To her husband.] Let me ſpeak in my turn, goodman Forward.

To Eſop.] Sir, here's I and my husband, I ſay, think we have as good pretenſions to the king's favour as ever a lord in the land.

Eſop. If you have no better than ſome lords in the land, I hope you won't expect much for your ſervice.

Mr. *Fruit.* An't pleaſe you, you ſhall be judge yourſelf.

Mrs. *Fruit.* That's as he gives ſentence, Mr. Littlewit; who gave you power to come to a reference? If he does not do us right, the king himſelf ſhall; what's to be done here!

To Eſop.] Sir, I'm forc'd to correct my husband a little; poor man, he is not us'd to court-buſineſs; but to give him his due, he's ready enough at ſome things: Sir, I have had twenty five children by him: fifteen of 'em are alive, and alive like to be; five tall daughters are wedded and bedded, and ten proper ſons ſerve their king and their country.

Eſop. A goodly company, upon my word!

Mrs. *Fruit.* Would all men take as much pains for the peopling of the kingdom, we might tuck up our aprons,

and cry a fig for our enemies; but we have ſuch a parcel of drones amongſt us——hold up your head, husband ——he's a little out of countenance, Sir, becauſe I chid him; but the man is a very good man at the bottom. But to come to my buſineſs, Sir; I hope his majeſty will think it reaſonable to allow me ſomething for the ſervice I have done him; 'tis pity but labour ſhou'd be encourag'd, eſpecially when what one has done, one has don't with a good-will.

Eſop. What profeſſion are you of, good people?

Mrs. *Fruit.* My husband's an inn-keeper, Sir; he bears the name, but I govern the houſe.

Eſop. And what poſts are your ſons in, in the ſervice?

Mrs. *Fruit.* Sir, there are four monks.

Mr. *Fruit.* Three attorneys.

Mrs. *Fruit.* Two ſcriveners.

Mr. *Fruit.* And an exciſe-man.

Eſop. The deux o'the ſervice; why, I thought they had been all in the army.

Mrs. *Fruit.* Not one, Sir.

Eſop. No, ſo it ſeems, by my troth: ten ſons that ſerve their country, quoth a! monks, attorneys, ſcriveners and exciſe-men, ſerve their country with a vengeance: you deſerve to be rewarded, truly; you deſerve to be hang'd, you wicked people you. Get you gone out of my ſight: I never was ſo angry in my life. [*Exit* Eſop.

Mr. *Fruit. to his Wife.*] So; who's in the right now, you or I? I told you what wou'd come on't; you muſt be always a breeding, and breeding, and the king wou'd take care of 'em: and the queen wou'd take care of 'em: and always ſome pretence or other there was. But now we have got a great kennel of whelps, and the devil will take care of 'em, for ought I ſee. For your ſons are all rogues, and your daughters are all whores, you know they are.

Mrs. *Fruit.* What, you are a grudging of your pains now, you lazy, ſluggiſh, flegmatic drone. You have a mind to die of a lethargy, have you? but I'll raiſe your ſpirits for you, I will ſo. Get you gone home, go; go home, you idle ſot, you, I'll raiſe your ſpirits for you.

[*Exit puſhing him before her.*

Re-enter Eſop.

Eſop ſolus.] Monks, attorneys, ſcriveners, and exciſemen!

Enter Oronces.

Or. O here he is. Sir, I have been ſearching for you, to ſay two words to you.

Eſop. And now you have found me, Sir, what are they?

Or. They, are, Sir——that my name's Oronces: you comprehend me.

Eſop. I comprehend your name.

Or. And not my buſineſs?

Eſop. Not I, by my troth.

Or. Then I ſhall endeavour to teach it you, monſieur Eſop.

Eſop. And I to learn it, monſieur Oronces.

Or. Know, Sir——that I admire Euphronia.

Eſop. Know, Sir——that you are in the right on't.

Or. But I pretend, Sir, that no body elſe ſhall admire her.

Eſop. Then I pretend, Sir, ſhe won't admire you.

Or. Why ſo, Sir?

Eſop. Becauſe, Sir——

Or. What, Sir?

Eſop. She's a woman, Sir.

Or. What then, Sir?

Eſop. Why then, Sir, ſhe deſires to be admir'd by every man ſhe meets.

Or. Sir, you are too familiar.

Eſop. Sir, you are too haughty; I muſt ſoften that harſh tone of yours: it don't become you, Sir; it makes a gentleman appear a porter, Sir; and that you may know the uſe of good language, I'll tell you what once happen'd.

Once on a time——

Or. I'll have none of your old wives fables, Sir, I have no time to loſe; therefore in a word——

Eſop. In a word, be mild: for nothing elſe will do you ſervice. Good manners and ſoft words have brought many a difficult thing to paſs. Therefore hear me patiently.

A cook one day who had been drinking,
(Only as many times, you know,
You ſpruce, young, witty beaux will do
T' avoid the dreadful pain of thinking)
Had orders ſent him to behead
A gooſe like any chaplain fed.
He took ſuch pains to ſet his knife right,
'T had done one good t' have loſt one's life by't.
But many men have many minds,
There's various taſtes in various kinds;
A ſwan (who by miſtake he ſeiz'd)
With wretched life was better pleas'd:
For as he went to give the blow,
In tuneful notes ſhe let him know,
She neither was a gooſe, nor wiſh'd
To make her Exit *ſo.*
The cook (who thought of nought but blood,
Except it were the greaſe,
For that you know's his fees)
To hear her ſing, in great amazement ſtood.
Cods-fiſh, quoth he, 'twas well you ſpoke,
For I was juſt upon the ſtroke:
Your feathers have ſo much of gooſe,
A drunken cook cou'd do no leſs
Than think you one; that you'll confeſs:
But y'have a voice ſo ſoft, ſo ſweet,
That rather than you ſhall be eat,
The houſe ſhall ſtarve for want of meat:
And ſo he turn'd her looſe.

To Or.] Now, Sir, what ſay you? will you be the ſwan, or the gooſe?

Or. The choice can't, ſure, be difficult to make;
I hope you will excuſe my youthful heat,
Young men and lovers have a claim to pardon:
But ſince the faults of age have no ſuch plea,
I hope you'll be more cautious of offending.
The flame that warms Euphronia's heart and mine,
Has long, alas! been kindled in our breaſts:
Even years are paſt ſince our two ſouls were wed,
'Twou'd be adultery but to wiſh to part 'em.

And wou'd a lump of clay alone content you,
A miſtreſs cold and ſenſleſs in your arms,
Without the leaſt remains or ſigns of life,
Except her ſighs, to mourn her abſent lover?
Whilſt you ſhou'd preſs her in your eager arms,
With fond deſire and extaſy of love,
Wou'd it not pierce you to the very ſoul,
To ſee her tears run trickling down her cheeks,
And know their fountain mean't 'em all to me?
Cou'd you bear this?
Yet thus the gods revenge themſelves on thoſe
Who ſtop the happy courſe of mutual love.
If you muſt be unfortunate one way,
Chuſe that where juſtice may ſupport your grief,
And ſhun the weighty courſe of injur'd lovers.

Eſop. Why, this is pleading like a ſwan indeed!
Were any thing at ſtake but my Euphronia———

Or. Your Euphronia, Sir———

Eſop. The gooſe——take heed——
Were any thing, I ſay, at ſtake but her,
Your plea wou'd be too ſtrong to be refus'd.
But our debate's about a lady, Sir,
That's young, that's beautiful, that's made for love.
——— ſo am not I, you'll ſay? but you're miſtaken Sir;
I'm made to love, tho not to be belov'd. I have a heart like yours; I've folly too: I've every inſtrument of love like others.

Or. But, Sir, you have not been ſo long a lover; your paſſion's young and tender.
'Tis eaſy for you to become its maſter;
Whilſt I ſhou'd ſtrive in vain; mine's old and fixt.

Eſop. The older 'tis, the eaſier to be govern'd?
Were mine of as long a ſtanding, 'twere poſſible I might get the better on't. Old paſſions are like old men; weak, and ſoon joſtled into the kennel.

Or. Yet age ſometimes is ſtrong, even to the verge of life.

Eſop. Ah, but there our compariſon don't hold.

Or. You are too merry to be too much in love.

Eſop. And you too ſad to be ſo long.

Or. My grief may end my days, ſo quench my flame, but nothing elſe can e'er extinguiſh it.

Eſop. Don't be diſcourag'd, Sir; I have ſeen many a man out-live his paſſion twenty years.

Or. But I have ſworn to die Euphronia's ſlave.

Eſop. A decay'd face always abſolves a lover's oath.

Or. Lovers whoſe oaths are made to faces then: but 'tis Euphronia's ſoul that I adore, which never can decay.

Eſop. I wou'd fain ſee a young fellow in love with a ſoul of threeſcore.

Or. Quit but Euphronia to me, and you ſhall;
At leaſt if Heaven's bounty will afford us
But years enow to prove my conſtancy,
And this is all I ask the gods and you. [*Exit* Or.

Eſop *ſolus.*

A good pretence however to beg long life.
How groſly do the inclinations of the fleſh
Impoſe upon the ſimplicity of the ſpirit!
Had this young fellow but ſtudy'd anatomy, he'd have found the ſource of his paſſion lay far from his miſtreſs's ſoul.
Alas! alas!
Had women no more charms in their bodies,
Than what they have in their minds,
We ſhould ſee more wiſe men in the world,
And much fewer lovers and poets. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

Enter Euphronia *and* Doris.

Euph. HEAVENS, what is't you make me do, Doris? Apply myſelf to the man I loath; beg favours from him I hate; ſeek a reprieve from him I abhor; 'tis low, 'tis mean, 'tis baſe in me.

Dor. Why, you hate the devil as much as you do Eſop, (or within a ſmall matter) and ſhould you think it a ſcandal to pray him to let you alone a day or two, if he were a going to run away with you; ha?

Euph. I don't know what I think, nor what I ſay, nor what I do: but ſure thou'rt not my friend thus to adviſe me.

Dor. I adviſe! I adviſe nothing; e'en follow your

own way; marry him, and make much of him. I have a mind to ſee ſome of his breed; if you like it, I like it: he ſhan't breed out of me only; that's all I have to take care of.

Euph. Prithee don't diſtract me.

Dor. Why, to-morrow's the day, fix'd and firm, you know it; much meat, little order, great many relations, few friends, horſe-play, noiſe, and bawdy ſtories, all's ready for a complete wedding.

Euph. Oh! what ſhall I do?

Dor. Nay, I know this makes you tremble; and yet your tender conſcience ſcruples to drop one hypocritical curt'ſy, and ſay, pray, Mr. Eſop, be ſo kind to defer it a few days longer.

Euph. Thou know'ſt I cannot diſſemble.

Dor. I know you can diſſemble well enough when you ſhou'd not do't. Do you remember how you us'd to plague your poor Oronces; make him believe you loath'd him, when you cou'd have kiſs'd the ground he went on; affront him in all public places; ridicule him in all company; abuſe him where-ever you went: and when you had reduc'd him within an ace of hanging or drowning, then come home with tears in your eyes, and cry, now, Doris, let's go lock ourſelves up, and talk of my dear Oronces: is not this true?

Euph. Yes, yes, yes. But, prithee, have ſome compaſſion of me. Come, I'll do any thing thou bid'ſt me—— —— what ſhall I ſay to this monſter? tell me, and I'll obey thee.

Dor. Nay, then there's ſome hopes of you. Why you muſt tell him——'tis natural to you to diſlike folks at firſt ſight: that ſince you have conſider'd him better, you find your averſion abated: that tho perhaps it may be a hard matter for you ever to think him a beau, you don't deſpair in time of finding out his *Je-ne-ſçay-quoy*. And that on t'other ſide; tho you have hitherto thought (as moſt young women do) that nothing cou'd remove your firſt affection, yet you have very great hopes in the natural inconſtancy of your ſex.

Tell him, 'tis not impoſſible, a change may happen, provided he gives you time: but that if he goes to force you,

there's another piece of nature peculiar to woman, which may chance to ſpoil all, and that's contradiction: ring that argument well in his ears: he's a philoſopher, he knows it has weight in it.

In ſhort, wheedle, whine, flatter, lye, weep, ſpare nothing; it's a moiſt age, women have tears enow; and when you have melted him down, and gain'd more time, we'll employ it in cloſet debates how to cheat him to the end of the chapter.

Euph. But you don't conſider, Doris, that by this means I engage myſelf to him; and can't afterwards with honour retreat.

Dor. Madam, I know the world——honour's a jeſt, when jilting's uſeful.

Beſides, he that wou'd have you break your oath with Oronces, can never have the impudence to blame you for cracking your word with himſelf. But who knows what may happen between the cup and the lip? let either of the old gentlemen die, and we ride triumphant. Wou'd I cou'd but ſee the ſtateſman ſick a little, I'd recommend a doctor to him, a couſin of mine, a man of conſcience, a wiſe phyſician; tip but the wink, he underſtands you.

Euph. Thou wicked wench, wou'dſt poiſon him?

Dor. I don't know what I wou'd do; I think, I ſtudy, I invent, and ſomehow I will get rid of him. I do more for you, I'm ſure, than you and your knight-errant do together for yourſelves.

Euph. Alas, both he and I do all we can; thou know'ſt we do.

Dor. Nay, I know y'are willing enough to get together; but y'are a couple of helpleſs things, Heaven knows.

Euph. Our ſtars, thou ſee'ſt, are bent to oppoſition.

Dor. Stars—I'd fain ſee the ſtars hinder me from running away with the man I lik'd.

Euph. Ay, but thou know'ſt, ſhou'd I diſoblige my father, he'd give my portion to my younger ſiſter.

Dor. Ay, there the ſhoe pinches, there's the love of the age! ah!——to what an ebb of paſſion are lovers ſunk in theſe days! give me a woman that runs away with a man, when his whole eſtate's pack'd up in his napſack: that tucks up her coats to her knees; and thro'

thick and thro' thin, from quarters to camp, trudges heartily on, with a child at her back, another in her arms, and a brace in her belly: there's flame with a witneſs, where this is the effects on't. But we muſt have love in a feather-bed: forſooth, a coach and ſix horſes, clean linen, and a cawdle! fie, for ſhame.

O ho, here comes our man. Now ſhew yourſelf a woman, if you are one.

Enter Eſop.

Eſop. I'm told, fair virgin, you deſire to ſpeak with me. Lovers are apt to flatter themſelves; I take your meſſage for a favour. I hope 'twas meant ſo.

Euph. Favours from women are ſo cheap of late, men may expect 'em truly without vanity.

Eſop. If the women are ſo liberal, I think the men are generous too on their ſide: 'tis a well bred age, thank Heaven; and a deal of civility there paſſes between the two ſexes. What ſervice is't that I can do you, lady?

Euph. Sir, I have a ſmall favour to intreat you.

Eſop. What is't; I don't believe I ſhall refuſe you.

Euph. What if you ſhou'd promiſe me you won't?

Eſop. Why then I ſhou'd make a divorce between my good breeding and my ſenſe, which ought to be as ſacred a knot as that of wedlock.

Euph. Dare you not truſt then, Sir, the thing you love?

Eſop. Not when the thing I love don't love me: never.

Dor. Truſt is ſometimes the way to be belov'd.

Eſop. Ay, but 'tis oftener the way to be cheated.

Euph. Pray promiſe me you'll grant my ſuit.

Dor. 'Tis a reaſonable one, I give you my word for't.

Eſop. If it be ſo, I do promiſe to grant it.

Dor. That's ſtill leaving yourſelf judge.

Eſop. Why, who's more concern'd in the trial?

Dor. But no body ought to be judge in their own cauſe.

Eſop. Yet he that is ſo, is ſure to have no wrong done him.

Dor. But if he does wrong to others, that's worſe.

Eſop. Worſe for them, but not for him.

Dor. True politician, by my troth!

Eſop. Men muſt be ſo when they have to do with ſharpers.

Euph. If I ſhould tell you then there were a poſſibility I might be brought to love you, you'd ſcarce believe me.

Eſop. I ſhou'd hope as a lover, and ſuſpect as a ſtateſman.

Dor. aſide.] Love and wiſdom! there's the paſſion of the age again.

Euph. You have liv'd long, Sir, and obſerv'd much: did you never ſee time produce ſtrange changes?

Eſop. Amongſt women, I muſt confeſs I have.

Euph. Why, I'm a woman, Sir.

Eſop. Why, truly, that gives me ſome hopes.

Euph. I'll encreaſe 'em, Sir; I have already been in love two years.

Dor. And time, you know, wears all things to tatters.

Eſop. Well obſerv'd.

Euph. What if you ſhou'd allow me ſome to try what I can do?

Eſop. Why, truly, I wou'd have patience a day or two, if there was as much probability of my being your new gallant, as perhaps there may be of changing your old one.

Dor. She ſhall give you fair play for't, Sir; opportunity and leave to prattle, and that's what carries moſt women in our days. Nay, ſhe ſhall do more for you. You ſhall play with her fan; ſqueeze her little finger; buckle her ſhoe; read a romance to her in the arbour; and ſaunter in the woods on a moonſhiny night. If this don't melt her, ſhe's no woman, or you no man——

Eſop. I'm not a man to melt a woman that way: I know myſelf, and know what they require. 'Tis thro' a woman's eye you pierce her heart. And I've no darts can make their entrance there.

Dor. You are a great ſtateſman, Sir; but I find you know little of our matters. A woman's heart is to be enter'd forty ways. Every ſenſe ſhe has about her keeps a door to it. With a ſmock-face, and a feather, you get in at her eyes. With powerful nonſenſe, in ſoft words, you creep in at her ears. An eſſenc'd peruke, and a ſweet handkerchief, lets you in at her noſe. With a treat, and a box full of ſweat-meats, you ſlip in at her mouth: and if you wou'd enter by her ſenſe of feeling, 'tis as beaten

a road as the reſt. What think you now, Sir? *There are more ways to the wood than one*, you ſee.

Eſop. Why, you're an admirable pilot; I don't doubt but you have ſteer'd many a ſhip ſafe to harbour: but I'm an old ſtubborn ſeaman; I muſt ſail by my own compaſs ſtill.

Euph. And, by your obſtinacy, loſe your veſſel.

Eſop. No: I'm juſt entring into port; we'll be married to morrow.

Euph. For Heaven's ſake defer it ſome days longer: I cannot love you yet; indeed I cannot.

Eſop. Nor never will, I dare ſwear.

Euph. Why then will you marry me?

Eſop. Becauſe I love you.

Euph If you lov'd me, you wou'd never make me miſerable.

Eſop. Not if I lov'd you for your ſake; but I love you for my own.

Dor. aſide.] There's an old rogue for you.

Euph. weeping] Is there no way left! muſt I be wretched?

Eſop. 'Tis but reſolving to be pleas'd. You can't imagine the ſtrength of reſolution. I have ſeen a woman reſolve to be in the wrong all the days of her life; and by the help of her reſolution, ſhe has kept her word to a tittle.

Euph. Methinks the ſubject we're upon ſhou'd be of weight enough to make you ſerious.

Eſop. Right: to-morrow morning pray be ready; you'll find me ſo: I'm ſerious. Now I hope you are pleas'd.

[*Turning away from her.*

Euph. *going off weeping and leaning upon* Doris.] Break heart! for if thou hold'ſt, I'm miſerable.

Dor. to Eſop.] Now may the extravagance of a lewd wife, with the inſolence of a virtuous one, join hand in hand, to bring thy grey hairs to the grave.

[*Exeunt* Euphronia *and* Doris.

Eſop. My old friend wiſhes me well to the laſt, I ſee.

Enter Learchus *haſtily, follow'd by* Oronces.

Or. Pray hear me, Sir.

Lear. 'Tis in vain I'm reſolv'd I tell you.

Moſt noble Eſop, ſince you are pleas'd to accept of my poor off-ſpring for your conſort, be ſo charitable to my old age, to deliver me from the impertinence of youth, by making you her wife this inſtant; for there's a plot againſt my life: they have reſolv'd to teaze me to death to night, that they may break the match to-morrow morning. Marry her this inſtant, I intreat you.

Eſop. This inſtant, ſay you!

Lear. This inſtant; this very inſtant.

Eſop. 'Tis enough; get all things ready; I'll be with you in a moment. [*Exit* Eſop.

Lear. Now, what ſay you, Mr. Flame-fire? I ſhall have the whip-hand of you preſently.

Or. Defer it till to-morrow, Sir.

Lear. That you may run away with her to-night; ha?———

Sir, your moſt obedient, humble ſervant.
Hey, who waits there? call my daughter to me; quick.
I'll give her her diſpatches preſently.

Enter Euphronia.

Euph. D'ye call, Sir?

Lear. Yes, I do, minx. Go ſhift yourſelf, and put on your beſt cloaths. You are to be marry'd.

Euph. Marry'd, Sir?

Lear. Yes, marry'd, madam; and that this inſtant too.

Euph. Dear, Sir!

Lear. Not a word: obedience and a clean ſmock; diſpatch. [*Exit* Euphronia *weeping.*

Learchus *going off, turns to* Oronces.] Sir, your moſt obedient humble ſervant.

Or. Yet hear what I've to ſay.

Lear. And what have you to ſay, Sir?

Or. Alas! I know not what I have to ſay, Sir!

Lear. Very like ſo. That's a ſure ſign he's in love now.

Or. Have you no bowels?

Lear. Ha, ha! bowels in a parent! here's a young fellow for you. Hark thee, ſtripling; being in a very merry humour, I don't care if I diſcover ſome paternal ſecrets to thee.

Know then, that how humourſome, how whimſical ſoever we may appear, there's one fix't principle that runs

thro' almoſt the whole race of us; and that's to pleaſe ourſelves. Why do'ſt think I got my daughter? why, there was ſomething in't that pleaſed me. Why do'ſt think I marry my daughter? why to pleaſe myſelf ſtill. And what is't that pleaſes me? why, my intereſt; what do'ſt think it ſhou'd be? If Eſop's my ſon-in-law, he'll make me a lord: if thou art my ſon in-law——thou'lt make me a grandfather. Now I having more mind to be a lord than a grandfather, give my daughter to him, and not to thee.

Or. Then ſhall her happineſs weigh nothing with you?

Lear. Not this. If it did, I'd give her to thee, and not to him.

Or. Do you think forc'd marriage the way to keep women virtuous?

Lear. No; nor I don't care whether women are virtuous or not.

Or. You know your daughter loves me.

Lear. I do ſo.

Or. What, if the children that Eſop may happen to father ſhou'd chance to be begot by me?

Lear. Why, then Eſop wou'd be the cuckold, not I.

Or. Is that all your care?

Lear. Yes: I ſpeak as a father.

Or What think you of your child's concern in t'other world?

Lear. Why, I think it my child's concern, not mine. I ſpeak as a father.

Or. Do you remember you once gave me your conſent to wed your daughter.

Lear. I did.

Or. Why did you ſo?

Lear. Becauſe you were the beſt match that offer'd at that time. I did like a father.

Or. Why then, Sir, I do like a lover. I'll make you keep your word, or cut your throat.

Lear. Who waits there, ha?

Enter Servants.

Seize me that bully there. Carry him to priſon, and keep him ſafe. [*They ſeize him.*

Or. Why, you won't uſe me thus?

Lear. Yes, but I will tho: away with him. Sir, your moſt humble ſervant: I wiſh you a good night's reſt; and as far as a merry dream goes, my daughter's at your ſervice.

Or. Death and furies! [*Exeunt Serv. with* Oron.

Lear. *ſinging.*] *Dol, de tol dol, dol, de tol dol:*
Lilly Burleighre's lodg'd in a bough.

Enter a troop of Muſicians, Dancers, &c.

Lear. How now! what have we got here?

Muſ. Sir, we are a troop of trifling fellows, fiddlers, and dancers, come to celebrate the wedding of your fair daughter, if your honour pleaſes to give us leave.

Lear. With all my heart: but who do you take me for, Sir, ha?

Muſ. I take your honour for our noble governor of Cyſicus.

Lear. Governor of Cyſicus; governor of a cheeſe-cake! I'm father-in-law to the great Eſop, ſirrah.

All bow to him.

Aſide.]—I ſhall be a great man.
Come, tune your fiddles; ſhake your legs: get all things ready. My ſon-in-law will be here preſently———I ſhall be a great man. [*Exit.*

Muſ. A great marriage, brother: what do'ſt think will be the end on't?

2 *Muſ.* Why, I believe we ſhall ſee three turns upon't. This old fellow here will turn fool; his daughter will turn ſtrumpet; and his ſon-in-law will turn 'em both out of doors. But that's nothing to thee nor me, as long as we are paid for our fiddling. So tune away, gentlemen.

2 *Muſ.* D'ye hear, trumpets! when the bride appears, ſalute her with a melancholy waft. 'Twill ſuit her humour; for I gueſs ſhe mayn't be over well pleas'd.

Enter Learchus *with ſeveral friends, and a Prieſt.*

Lear. Gentlemen and friends, y'are all welcome. I have ſent to as many of you as our ſhort time wou'd give me leave, to deſire you wou'd be witneſſes of the honour the great Eſop deſigns ourſelf and family. Hey, who attends there?
Go let my daughter know I wait for her.

[*Exeunt Servants.*

——'Tis a vaſt honour that is done me, gentlemen.

2 *Gent.* It is indeed, my lord.

Lear. aſide.] Look you there; if they don't call me my lord already —— I ſhall be a great man.

Enter Euphronia *weeping, and leaning upon* Doris, *both in deep mourning.*

Lear. How now! what's here? all in deep mourning! here's a provoking baggage for you.

[*The trumpets ſound a melancholy air till* Eſop *appears; and then the violins and hautboys ſtrike up a* Lancaſhire *horn-pipe.*

Enter Eſop *in a gay foppiſh dreſs, long peruke,* &c. *a gaudy equipage of pages and footmen, all enter in an airy briſk manner.*

Eſop, *in an affected tone to* Euphronia.] Gad take my ſoul, mame, I hope I ſhall pleaſe you now ——— gentlemen all, I'm your humble ſervant. I'm going to be a very happy man, you ſee.

To Euph.] When the heat of the ceremony's over, if your ladyſhip pleaſes, mame, I'll wait upon you to take the air in the park. Hey, page; let there be a coach and ſix horſes ready inſtantly.

Obſerving her dreſs.] ——— I vow to Gad, mame, I was ſo taken up with my good fortune, I did not obſerve the extreme fancy of your ladyſhip's wedding cloaths—infinitely pretty, as I hope to be ſav'd; a world of variety, and not at all gaudy.

To Lear.]——My dear father-in-law, embrace me.

Lear. Your lordſhip does me too much honour.

Aſide.]——I ſhall be a great man.

Eſop. Come, gentlemen, are all things ready? where's the prieſt?

Prieſt. Here, my noble lord.

Eſop. Moſt reverend ——— will you pleaſe to ſay grace that I may fall to, for I'm very hungry, and here's very good meat. But where's my rival all this while? the leaſt we can do, is to invite him to the wedding.

Lear. My lord, he's in priſon.

Eſop. In priſon! how ſo?

Lear. He would have murder'd me.

Eſop. A bloody fellow! but let's ſee him however. Send for him quickly.

Ha, governor———that handſome daughter of yours, I will ſo mumble her——

Lear. I ſhall be a great man.

Enter Oronces *pinion'd and guarded.*

Eſop. O ho, here's my rival! then we have all we want. Advance, Sir, if you pleaſe. I deſire you'll do me the favour to be a witneſs to my marriage, leſt one of theſe days you ſhou'd take a fancy to diſpute my wife with me.

Or. Do you then ſend for me to inſult me? 'tis baſe in you.

Eſop. I have no time now to throw away upon points of generoſity; I have hotter work upon my hands. Come, prieſt, advance.

Lear. Pray hold him faſt there; he has the devil and all of miſchief in's eye.

Eſop to Euph.] Will your ladyſhip pleaſe, mame, to give me your fair hand ———hey-dey.

[*She refuſes her hand.*

Lear. I'll give it you, my noble lord, if ſhe won't.

Aſide.] A ſtubborn, ſelf-will'd, ſtiff-necked ſtrumpet.

[Learchus *holds out her hand to* Eſop, *who takes it*; Oronces *ſtands on* Eſop's *left hand, and the prieſt before 'em.*

Eſop. Let my rival ſtand next me: of all men I'd have him be ſatisfy'd.

Or. Barbarous inhuman monſter!

Eſop. Now, prieſt, do thy office.

Flouriſh with the trumpets.

Prieſt. Since the eternal laws of Fate decree,
That he, thy husband; ſhe thy wife ſhou'd be,
May Heaven take you to its care,
May Jupiter look down,
And may his godhead never frown
Upon this happy pair. *Flouriſh again of trumpets.*

[*As the prieſt pronounces the laſt line,* Eſop *joins* Oronces *and* Euphronia's *hands.*

Or. O happy change! bleſſings on bleſſings wait on the generous Eſop.

Eſop. Happy, thrice happy may you ever be,
And if you think there's ſomething due to me,
Pay it in mutual love and conſtancy.

Euph to Eſop.] You'll pardon me, moſt generous man, if in the preſent tranſports of my ſoul, which you yourſelf have by your bounty caus'd, my willing tongue is ty'd from uttering the thoughts that flow from a moſt grateful heart.

Eſop. For what I've done I merit little thanks,
Since what I've done, my duty bound me to.
I wou'd your father had acquitted his:
But he who's ſuch a tyrant o'er his children,
To ſacrifice their peace to his ambition,
Is fit to govern nothing but himſelf.

To Lear.] And therefore, Sir, at my return to court:
I ſhall take care this city may be ſway'd
By more humanity than dwells in you.

Lear. aſide.] I ſhall be a great man.

Euph. to Eſop.] Had I not reaſon, from your conſtant goodneſs,
To judge your bounty, Sir, is infinite,
I ſhou'd not dare to ſhew for farther favours:
But pardon me, if imitating Heaven and you,
I eaſily forgive my aged father,
And beg that Eſop would forgive him too.

[*Kneeling to him.*

Eſop. The injury he wou'd have done to you was great indeed: but 'twas a bleſſing he deſign'd for me. If therefore you can pardon him, I may.

To Lear.] Your injur'd daughter, Sir, has on her knees intreated for her cruel barbarous father; and by her goodneſs has obtain'd her ſuit. If in the remnant of your days you can find out ſome way to recompenſe her, do it, that men and gods may pardon you, as ſhe and I have done. But let me ſee, I have one quarrel ſtill to make up. Where's my old friend, Doris?

Dor. She's here, Sir, at your ſervice; and as much your friend as ever; true to her principles, and firm to her miſtreſs. But ſhe has a much better opinion of you now than ſhe had half an hour ago.

Eſop. She has reaſon: for my ſoul appear'd then as de-

form'd as my body. But I hope now one may ſo far mediate for t'other, that provided I don't make love, the women won't quarrel with me; for they are worſe enemies even than they are friends.

Come, gentlemen, I'll humour my dreſs a little longer, and ſhare with you in the diverſions theſe boon companions have prepar'd us. Let's take our places, and ſee how they can divert us.

Eſop *leads the bride to her place. All being ſeated, there's a ſhort concert of hautboys, trumpets, &c. After which a dance between an old man and a young woman, who ſhuns him ſtill as he comes near her. At laſt he ſtops, and begins this dialogue; which they ſing together.*

Old Man.

Why ſo cold, and why ſo coy?
What I want in youth and fire,
I have in love and in deſire:
To my arms, my love, my joy?
Why ſo cold, and why ſo coy?

Woman.

'Tis ſympathy perhaps with you;
You are cold, and I'm ſo too.

Old Man.

My years alone have froze my blood;
Youthful heat in female charms,
Glowing in my aged arms,
Wou'd melt it down once more into a flood.

Woman.

Women, alas, like flints, ne'er burn alone;
To make a virgin know
There's fire within the ſtone,
Some manly ſteel muſt boldly ſtrike the blow:

Old Man.

Aſſiſt me only with your charms,
You'll find I'm man, and ſtill am bold;
You'll find I ſtill can ſtrike, tho old:
I only want your aid to raiſe my arm.

[*Enter a* Youth, *who ſeizes on the young woman.*]

Youth.

Who talks of charms, who talks of aid?
I bring an arm
That wants no charm,
To rouze the fire that's in a flinty maid.
Retire old age,
———Winter be gone:
Behold the youthful Spring comes gayly on.
Here, here's a torch to light a virgin's fire:
To my arms, my love, my joy;
When women have what they deſire,
They're neither cold nor coy. [She takes him in her arms.

The ſong and dance ended, Eſop *takes* Euphronia *and* Oronces *by the hands, leading them forwards.*

Eſop. By this time, my young eager couple, 'tis probable you wou'd be glad to be alone; perhaps you'll have a mind to go to bed even without your ſupper; for brides and bridegrooms eat little on their wedding-night. But ſince if matrimony were worn as it ought to be, it wou'd perhaps ſit eaſier about us than uſually it does, I'll give you one word of counſel, and ſo I ſhall releaſe you.
When one is out of humour, let the other be dumb.
Let your diverſions be ſuch as both may have a ſhare in 'em.
Never let familiarity exclude reſpect.
Be clean in your clothes, but nicely ſo in your perſons.
Eat at one table, lie in one room, but ſleep in two beds:
I'll tell the ladies why.

Turning to the boxes.

In the ſprightly month of May,
When males and females ſport and play,
And kiſs and toy away the day;
An eager ſparrow and his mate,
Chirping on a tree were ſate,
Full of love———and full of prate.
They talk'd of nothing but their fires,
Of raging heats, and ſtrong deſires,
Of eternal conſtancy;
How true and faithful they wou'd be,

Of this and that, and endleſs joys,
And a thouſand more ſuch toys:
The only thing they apprehended,
Was that their lives wou'd be ſo ſhort,
They cou'd not finiſh half their ſport
Before their days were ended.
But as from bough to bough they rove,
They chanc'd at laſt
In furious haſte,
On a twig with birdlime ſpread,
(Want of a more downy bed)
To act a ſcene of love.
Fatal it prov'd to both their fires.
For tho at length they broke away,
And baulk'd the ſchool boy of his prey,
Which made him weep the live-long day,
The bridegroom in the haſty ſtrife,
Was ſtuck ſo faſt to his dear wife,
That tho he us'd his utmoſt art,
He quickly found it was in vain,
To put himſelf to farther pain,
They never more muſt part.
A gloomy ſhade o'ercaſt his brow;
He found himſelf ——— I know not how:
He look'd as husbands often do.
Where-e'er he mov'd, he felt her ſtill,
She kiſs'd him oft againſt his will:
Abroad, at home, at bed and board,
With favours ſhe o'erwhelm'd her lord.
Oft he turn'd his head away,
And ſeldom had a word to ſay,
Which abſolutely ſpoil'd her play,
For ſhe was better ſtor'd.
Howe'er at length her ſtock was ſpent,
(For female fires ſometimes may be
Subject to mortality;)
So back to back they ſit, and ſullenly repent.
But the mute ſcene was quickly ended,
The lady, for her ſhare, pretended
The want of love lay at his door,
For her part ſhe had ſtill in ſtore

Enough for him and twenty more,
Which cou'd not be contended.
He anſwer'd her in homely words,
(For ſparrows are but ill-bred birds)
That he already had enjoy'd
So much, that truly he was cloy'd.
Which ſo provok'd her ſpleen,
That after ſome good hearty prayers,
A joſtle, and ſome ſpiteful tears,
They fell together by the ears,
And ne'er were fond again.

E S O P.

PART II.

Enter Players.

Eſop. WELL, good people, who are all you?

Omnes. Sir, we are players.

Eſop. Players! What players?

Play. Why, Sir, we are ſtage-players, that's our calling: tho we play upon other things too; ſome of us play upon the fiddle; ſome play upon the flute; we play upon one another; we play upon the town; and we play upon the patentees.

Eſop. Patentees! Prithee, what are they?

Play. Why, they are, Sir——Sir, they are——! Cod I don't know what they are——fiſh or fleſh——maſters or ſervants——ſometimes one——ſometimes t'other, I think——juſt as we are in the mood.

Eſop. Why, I thought they had a lawful authority over you.

Play. Lawful authority, Sir——Sir, we are free-born Engliſhmen, we care not for law nor authority neither, when we are out of humour.

Eſop. But I think they pretended at leaſt to an authority over you; pray upon what foundation was it built?

Play. Upon a rotten one——if you'll believe us. Sir, I'll tell you what the projectors did: they embark'd twenty thouſand pound upon a leaky veſſel——ſhe was built at Whitehall; I think they call'd her——the patent——ay, the patent: her keel was made of a broad ſeal——and the king gave 'em a white ſtaff for their main-maſt. She was a pretty tight frigate to look upon, indeed: they ſpar'd nothing to ſet her off; they

gilded her, and painted her, and rigg'd, and gunn'd her: and ſo ſent her a privateering. But the firſt ſtorm that blew, down went the maſt, aſhoar went the ſhip———crack ſays the keel, mercy cry'd the pilot; but the wind was ſo high, his pray'rs cou'd not be heard———ſo they ſplit upon a rock———that lay hid under a petticoat.

Eſop. A very ſad ſtory, this; but what became of the ſhip's company?

Play. Why, Sir, your humble ſervants here, who were the officers, and the beſt of the ſailors——(little Ben amongſt the reſt) ſeiz'd on a ſmall bark that lay to our hand, and away we put to ſea again. To ſay the truth, we are better mann'd than rigg'd, and ammunition was plaguy ſcarce amongſt us———however, a cruiſing we went, and ſome petty ſmall prizes we have made; but the bleſſing of Heaven not being among us———or how the devil 'tis, I can't tell; but we are not rich.

Eſop. Well, but what became of the reſt of the crew?

Play. Why, Sir, as for the ſcoundrels, they, poor dogs, ſtuck by the wrack. The captain gave them, bread and cheeſe, and good words———he told them, if they wou'd patch her up, and venture t'other cruiſe, he'd prefer 'em all; ſo to work they went, and to ſea they got her.

Eſop. I hope he kept his word with 'em.

Play. That he did; he made the boatſwain's mate lieutenant; he made the cook doctor: he was forc'd to be purſer, and pilot, and gunner himſelf; and the ſwabber took orders to be chaplain.

Eſop. But with ſuch unskilful officers, I'm afraid, they'll hardly keep above water long.

Play. Why truly, Sir, we care not how ſoon they are under: but curſt folks thrive, I think. I know nothing elſe that makes 'em ſwim. I'm ſure by the rules of navigation, they ought to have overſet long ſince: for they carry a great deal of ſail, and have very little ballaſt.

Eſop. I'm afraid you ruin one another. I fancy if you were all in a ſhip together again, you'd have leſs work, and more profit.

Play. Ah, Sir——we are reſolved we'll never ſail under captain Patentee again.

Eſop. Prithee, why ſo?

Play. Sir, he has us'd us like dogs.

Wom.——And bitches too, Sir.

Eſop. I'm ſorry to hear that; pray how was't he treated you?

Play. Sir, 'tis impoſſible to tell; he us'd uslike the Engliſh at Amboyna———

Eſop. But I wou'd know ſome particulars: tell me what 'twas he did to you?

Play. What he did, Sir,———why, he did in the firſt place, Sir——in the firſt place, Sir, he did———I cod I don't know what he did———can you tell wife?

Wom. Yes, marry can I; and a burning ſhame it was too.

Play. O, I remember now, Sir, he wou'd not give us plumbs enough in our pudding.

Eſop. That indeed was very hard; but did he give you as many as he promis'd you?

Play. Yes, and more; but what of all that, we had not as many as we had a mind to——

1 *Wom.* Sir, my husband tells you truth——

Eſop. I believe he may; but what other wrongs did he do you?

1 *Wom.* Why, Sir, he did not treat me with reſpect; 'twas not one day in three he wou'd ſo much as bid me good-morrow——

2 *Wom.* Sir, he invited me to dinner, and never drank my health.

1 *Wom.* Then he cock'd his hat at Mrs. Pert.

2 *Wom.* Yes, and told Mrs Slippery he had as good a face as ſhe had.

Eſop. Why, theſe were inſufferable abuſes——

2 *Play.* Then, Sir, I did but come to him one day——and tell him I wanted fifty pound, and what do you think he did by me, Sir———Sir, he turn'd round upon his heel like a top——

1 *Play.* But that was nothing to the affront he put upon me, Sir. I came to him, and in very civil words, as I thought, deſir'd him to double my pay: Sir, wou'd you believe it? he had the barbarity to ask me if I intended to double my work; and becauſe I told him no, Sir——he did uſe me, good Lord, how he did uſe me.

Eſop. Prithee how?

1 *Play.* Why he walk'd off, and anſwer'd me never a word.

Eſop. How had you patience?

1 *Play.* Sir, I had not patience. I ſent him a challenge; and what do you think his anſwer was——— he ſent me word I was a ſcoundrel ſon of a whore, and he wou'd only fight me by proxy———

Eſop. Very fine!

1 *Play.* At this rate, Sir, were we poor dogs us'd till one frolty morning down he comes amongſt us———and very roundly tells us———that for the future, no purchaſe, no pay. They that wou'd not work ſhou'd not eat———Sir, we at firſt ask'd him cooly and civilly——why? his anſwer was, becauſe the town wanted diverſion, and he wanted money———our reply to this, Sir, was very ſhort; but I think to the purpoſe.

Eſop. What was it?

1 *Play.* It was, Sir, that ſo we wallow'd in plenty and eaſe———the town and he might be damn'd———this, Sir, is the true hiſtory of ſeparation———and we hope you'll ſtand our friend———

Eſop. I'll tell you what, ſirs——

I once a pack of beagles knew———
That much reſembled I know who;
With a good huntſman at their tail,
In full command,
With whip in hand,
They'd run apace
The chearful chace,
And of their game were ſeldom known to fail.
But being at length their chance to find
A huntſman of a gentler kind,
They ſoon perceiv'd the rein was ſlack,
The word went quickly through the pack——
They one and all cry'd liberty;
This happy moment we are free,
We'll range the woods,
Like nymphs and gods,
And ſpend our mouths in praiſe of mutiny.

With that old Joular trots away,
And Bowman ſingles out his prey;
Thunder bellow'd thro' the wood,
And ſwore he'd burſt his guts with blood.
Venus tript it o'er the plain,
With boundleſs hopes of boundleſs gain.
——Juno, ſhe ſlipt down the hedge,
But left her ſacred word for pledge;
That all ſhe pickt up by the by——
Shou'd to the public treaſury.
And well they might rely upon her;
For Juno was a bitch of honour.
In ſhort they all had hopes to ſee
A heavenly crop of mutiny,
And ſo to reaping fell:
But in a little time they found,
It was the devil had till'd the ground,
And brought the ſeed from hell.
The pack divided, nothing throve:
Diſcord ſeiz'd the throne of love.
Want and miſery all endure;
All take pains, and all grow poor.
When they had toil'd the live-long day,
And came at night to view their prey,
Oft alas ſo ill they'd ſped,
That half went ſupperleſs to bed.
At length they all in council ſate,
Where at a very fair debate,
It was agree'd at laſt,
That ſlavery with eaſe and plenty,
When hounds were ſomething turn'd of twenty,
Was much a better fate,
Than 'twas to work and faſt.

1 *Play.* Well, Sir——and what did they do then?

Eſop. Why they all went home to their kennel again. If you think they did wiſely, you'll do well to follow their example. [*Exit* Eſop.

1 *Play.* Well, beagles, what think you of the little gentleman's advice?

2 *Wom.* I think he's a little ugly philoſopher, and talks like a fool.

1 *Play.* Ay, why there's it now! if he had been a tall handſome bloçkhead, he had talk'd like a wiſe man.

2 *Wom.* Why, do you think, Mr. Jowler, that we'll ever join again?

1 *Play.* I do think, ſweet Mrs. Juno, that if we do not join again, you muſt be a little freer of your carcaſe than you are, or you muſt bring down your pride to a ſerge petticoat.

1 *Wom.* And do you think, Sir, after the affronts I have receiv'd, the patent and I can ever be friends?

1 *Play.* I do think, madam, that if my intereſt had not been more affronted than your face, the patent and you had never been foes.

1 *Wom.* And ſo, Sir, then you have ſerious thoughts of a reconciliation!

1 *Play.* Madam, I do believe I may.

1 *Wom.* Why then, Sir, give me leave to tell you, that ——make it my intereſt, and I'll have ſerious thoughts on't too.

2 *Wom.* Nay, if you are thereabouts, I deſire to come into the treaty.

3 *Play.* And I.

4 *Play.* And I.

2 *Play.* And I. No ſeparate peace. None of your Turin play, I beſeech you.

1 *Play.* Why then, ſince you are all ſo Chriſtianly diſpos'd——I think we had beſt adjourn immediately to our council-chamber; chuſe ſome potent prince for mediator and guarantee——fix upon the place of treaty, diſpatch our plenipo's, and whip up the peace like an oyſter. For under the roſe, my confederates, here is ſuch a damn'd diſcount upon our bills, I'm afraid, if we ſtand it out another campaign, we muſt live upon ſlender ſubſiſtence. [*Exeunt.*

Enter a country Gentleman, who walks to and fro, looking angrily upon Eſop.

Eſop. Have you any buſineſs with me, Sir.

Gent. ——I can't tell whether I have or not.

Eſop. You ſeem diſturb'd, Sir.

Gent. I'm always ſo at the ſight of a courtier.

Eſop. Pray what may it be, that gives you ſo great an antipathy to 'em?

Gent. My profeſſion.

Eſop. What's that?

Gent. Honeſty.

Eſop. 'Tis an honeſt profeſſion. I hope, Sir, for the general good of mankind, you are in ſome public employment?

Gent. So I am, Sir,——no thanks to the court.

Eſop. You are then, I ſuppoſe, imploy'd by——

Gent. My country.

Eſop. Who have made you——

Gent. A ſenator.

Eſop. Sir, I reverence you. [*Bowing.*

Gent. Sir, you may reverence as low as you pleaſe; but ſhall ſpare none of you. Sir, I am intruſted by my country with above ten thouſand of their grievances, and in order to redreſs them, my deſign is to hang ten thouſand courtiers.

Eſop. Why, 'tis making ſhort work, I muſt confeſs; but are you ſure, Sir, that wou'd do't?

Gent. Sure,—ah, ſure.

Eſop. How do you know?

Gent. Why, the whole country ſays ſo, and I at the head of 'em. Now let me ſee who dares ſay the contrary.

Eſop. Not I, truly. But, Sir, if you won't take it ill, I'll ask you a queſtion or two.

Gent. Sir, I ſhall take ill what I pleaſe. And if you, or e'er a courtier of you all pretend the contrary, I ſay, it's a breach of privilege——now put your queſtion, if you think fit.

Eſop. Why, then, Sir, with all due regard to your character, and your privilege too, I wou'd be glad to know what you chiefly complain of?

Gent. Why, Sir, I do chiefly complain, that we have
A great many ſhips, and very little trade;
A great many tenants, and very little money;
A great many ſoldiers, and very little fighting;
A great many Gazettes, and little good news;
A great many ſtateſmen, and very little wiſdom;

A great many parſons, and not an ounce of religion.

Eſop. Why truly, Sir, I do confeſs theſe are grievances very well worth your redreſſing. I perceive you are truly ſenſible of our diſeaſes, but I'm afraid you are a little out in the cure.

Gent. Sir, I perceive you take me for a country-phyſician: but you ſhall find, Sir, that a country-doctor is able to deal with a court-quack; and to ſhew you that I do underſtand ſomething of the ſtate of the body politic, I will tell you, Sir, that I have heard a wiſe man ſay, the court is the ſtomach of the nation, in which, if the buſineſs be not thoroughly digeſted, the whole carcaſe will be in diſorder. Now, Sir, I do find by the feebleneſs of the members, and the vapours that fly into the head, that this ſame ſtomach is full of indigeſtions, which muſt be remov'd: and therefore, Sir, I am come poſt to town with my head full of *Crocus Mem.* and deſign to give the court a vomit.

Eſop. Sir, the phyſic you mention, tho neceſſary ſometimes, is of too violent a nature to be us'd without a great deal of caution. I'm afraid you are a little too raſh in your preſcriptions. Is it not poſſible you may be miſtaken in the cauſe of the diſtemper?

Gent. Sir, I do not think it poſſible I ſhou'd be miſtaken in any thing.

Eſop. Have you been long a ſenator?

Gent. No, Sir.

Eſop. Have you been much about town?

Gent. No, Sir.

Eſop. Have you convers'd much with men of buſineſs?

Gent. No, Sir.

Eſop. Have you made any ſerious enquiry into the preſent diſorders of the nation?

Gent. No, Sir.

Eſop. Have you ever heard what the men now imploy'd in buſineſs have to ſay for themſelves?

Gent. No, Sir.

Eſop. How then do you know they deſerve to be puniſh'd for the preſent diſorders in your affairs?

Gent. I'll tell you how I know.

Eſop. I would be glad to hear.

Gent. Why, I know by this——I know it, I ſay, by

this———that I'm ſure on't——and to give you demonſtration that I'm ſure on't, there is not one man in a good poſt in the nation —— but I'd give my vote to hang him: now I hope you are convinc'd.

Eſop. As for example: the firſt miniſter of ſtate, why wou'd you hang him?

Gent. Becauſe he gives bad counſel.

Eſop. How do you know?

Gent. Why they ſay ſo.

Eſop. And who would you put in his room?

Gent One that would give better.

Eſop. Who's that?

Gent. My ſelf.

Eſop. The ſecretary of ſtate, why wou'd you hang him?

Gent. Becauſe he has not good intelligence.

Eſop. How do you know?

Gent. I have heard ſo.

Eſop. And who wou'd you put in his place?

Gent. My father.

Eſop The treaſurer, why wou'd you hang him?

Gent. Becauſe he does not underſtand his buſineſs.

Eſop. How do you know?

Gent. I dreamt ſo.

Eſop. And who wou'd you have ſucceed him?

Gent. My uncle.

Eſop. The admiral, why wou'd you hang him?

Gent. Becauſe he has not deſtroy'd the enemies.

Eſop. How do you know he could do it?

Gent. Why, I believe ſo.

Eſop. And who would you have command in his ſtead?

Gent. My brother.

Eſop. And the general, why would you hang him?

Gent. Becauſe he took ne'er a town laſt campaign.

Eſop. And how do you know it was in his power?

Gent. Why I don't care a ſouſe whether it was in his power or not. But I have a ſon at home, a brave chopping lad; he has been captain in the militia theſe twelve months, and I'd be glad to ſee him in his place. What do you ſtare for, Sir? ha! I gad I tell you he'd ſcour all to the devil. He's none of your fencers, none of your ſa ſa men. Numps is downright, that's his play. You may ſee his

courage in his face: he has a pair of cheeks like two bladders, a nose as flat as your hand, and a forehead like a bull

Esop. In short, Sir, I find if you and your family were provided for, things would soon grow better than they do.

Gent. And so they wou'd, Sir. Clap me at the head of the state, and Numps at the head of the army: he with his club-musquet, and I with my club-head piece, we'd soon put an end to your business.

Esop. I believe you wou'd indeed. And therefore since I happen to be acquainted with your extraordinary abilities, I am resolv'd to give the king an account of you, and employ my interest with him, that you and your son may have the posts you desire.

Gent. Will you, by the Lord?——— give me your fist, Sir——the only honest courtier that ever I met with in my life.

Esop. But, Sir, when I have done you this mighty piece of service, I shall have a small request to beg of you, which I hope you won't refuse me.

Gent. What's that?

Esop. Why 'tis in behalf of the two officers who are to be displac'd to make room for you and your son.

Gent. The secretary and the general?

Esop. The same. 'Tis pity they shou'd be quite out of business; I must therefore desire you'll let me recommend one of 'em to you for your bailiff, and t'other for your huntsman.

Gent. My bailiff and my huntsman!——Sir, that's not to be granted.

Esop. Pray why!

Gent. Why?———because one wou'd ruin my land, and t'other wou'd spoil my fox-hounds.

Esop. Why do you think so?

Gent. Why do I think so!——— these courtiers will ask the strangest questions——why, Sir, do you think that men bred up to the state or the army, can understand the business of ploughing and hunting?

Esop. I did not know but they might.

Gent. How cou'd you think so?

Esop. Because I see men bred up to ploughing and hunt-

ing, underſtand the buſineſs of the ſtate and the army.

Gent. I'm ſhot——I ha'n't one word to ſay for myſelf ——I never was ſo caught in my life.

Eſop. I perceive, Sir, by your looks what I have ſaid has made ſome impreſſion upon you; and would perhaps do more if you wou'd give it leave. [*Taking his hand.*] Come, Sir, tho I am a ſtranger to you, I can be your friend; my favour at court does not hinder me from being a lover of my country. 'Tis my nature, as well as principle, to be pleas'd with the proſperity of mankind. I wiſh all things happy, and my ſtudy is to make them ſo.

The diſtempers of the government (which I own are great) have employ'd the ſtretch of my underſtanding, and the deepeſt of my thoughts, to penetrate the cauſe, and to find out the remedy. But alas! all the product of my ſtudy is this; that I find there is too near a reſemblance between the diſeaſes of the ſtate and thoſe of the body, for the moſt expert miniſter to become a greater maſter in one than the college is in t'other: and how far their skill extends, you may ſee by this lump upon my back. Allowances in all profeſſions there muſt be, ſince 'tis weak man that is the weak profeſſor. Believe me, ſenator, for I have ſeen the proof on't; the longeſt beard amongſt us is a fool. Cou'd you but ſtand behind the curtain, and there obſerve the ſecret ſprings of ſtate, you'd ſee in all the good or evil that attends it, ten ounces of chance for one grain either of wiſdom or roguery.

You'd ſee, perhaps, a venerable ſtateſman ſit faſt aſleep in a great downy chair; whilſt in that ſoft vacation of his thought, blind chance (or what at leaſt we blindly call ſo) ſhall ſo diſpoſe a thouſand ſecret wheels, that when he awakes, he needs but write his name, to publiſh to the world ſome bleſt event, for which his ſtatue ſhall be rais'd in braſs.

Perhaps a moment thence, you ſhall behold him torturing his brain; his thoughts all ſtretch'd upon the rack for public ſervice. The live long night, when all the world's at reſt, conſum'd in care, and watching for their ſafety, when by a whirlwind in his fate, in ſpite of him ſome miſchief ſhall befal 'em, for which a furious ſentence ſtrait ſhall paſs, and they ſhall vote him to the ſcaffold.

Even thus uncertain are rewards and punishments; and even thus little do the people know, when 'tis the statesman merits one or t'other.

Gent. Now I do believe I am beginning to be a wise man; for I never till now perceiv'd I was a fool. But do you then really believe, Sir, our men in business do the best they can?

Esop. Many of 'em do: some perhaps do not. But this you may depend upon; he that is out of business is the worst judge in the world of him that is in: first, because he seldom knows any thing of the matter: and, secondly, because he always desires to get his place.

Gent. And so, Sir, you turn the tables upon the plaintiff, and lay the fool and knave at his door.

Esop. If I do him wrong, I'm sorry for't. Let him examine himself, he'll find whether I do or not. [*Exit* Esop.

Gent. ——— Examine!-- ——— I think I have had enough of that already. There's nothing left, that I know of, but to give sentence: and truly I think there's no great difficulty in that. A very pretty fellow I am indeed! here am I come bellowing and roaring two hundred miles post to find myself an ass; when with one quarter of an hour's consideration I might have made the self-same discovery, without going over my threshold. Well! if ever they send me on their errand to reform the state again, I'll be damn'd. But this I'll do: I'll go home and reform my family, if I can: them I'm sure I know. There's my father's a peevish old coxcomb: there's my uncle's a drunken old sot: there's my brother's a cowardly bully: son Numps is a lubberly whelp: I've a great ramping daughter, that stares like a heifer; and a wife that's a flatternly sow. [*Exit.*

Enter a young, gay, airy Beau, *who stands smiling contemptibly upon* Esop.

Esop. Well, Sir, what are you?

Beau. A fool.

Esop. That's impossible; ——for if thou wert, thou'dst think thyself a wise man.

Beau. So I do ——— this is my own opinion ——— the t'other's my neighbours. [*Walking airily about.*

Eſop *gazing after him.*] Have you any buſineſs with me, Sir?

Beau. Sir, I have buſineſs with no body, pleaſure's my ſtudy.

Eſop *aſide.*] An odd fellow this!———pray, Sir, who are you?

Beau. I can't tell———

Eſop. ———Do you know who I am?

Beau. No, Sir: I'm a favourite at court, and I neither know myſelf nor any body elſe.

Eſop. Are you in any imployment?

Beau. Yes——

Eſop. What is't?

Beau. I don't know the name on't.

Eſop. You know the buſineſs on't, I hope?

Beau. That I do——the buſineſs of it is——to——put in a deputy and receive the money.

Eſop. ——Pray what may be your name?

Beau. Empty.

Eſop. Where do you live?

Beau. In the ſide-box.

Eſop. What do you do there?

Beau. I ogle the ladies.

Eſop. To what purpoſe?

Beau. To no purpoſe.

Eſop. Why then do you do it?

Beau. Becauſe they like it, and I like it.

Eſop. Wherein conſiſts the pleaſure?

Beau. In playing the fool.

Eſop. Pray Sir, what age are you?

Beau. Five and twenty my body; my head's about fifteen.

Eſop. Is your father living?

Beau. Dead, thank God.

Eſop. Has he been long ſo?

Beau. Poſitively yes.

Eſop. Where were you brought up?

Beau. At ſchool.

Eſop. What ſchool?

Beau. The ſchool of Venus.

Eſop. Were you ever at the univerſity?

Beau. Yes.

Eſop. What ſtudy did you follow there?

Beau. My bed-maker.

Eſop How long did you ſtay?

Beau. Till I had loſt my maidenhead.

Eſop Why did you come away?

Beau. Becauſe I was expell'd.

Eſop. Where did you go then?

Beau. To court.

Eſop. Who took care of your education there?

Beau. A whore and a dancing-maſter.

Eſop. What did you gain by them?

Beau. A minuet, and the pox.

Eſop. Have you an eſtate?

Beau. I had.

Eſop. What's become on't?

Beau. Spent.

Eſop. In what?

Beau. In a twelvemonth.

Eſop. But how?

Beau. Why, in dreſſing, drinking, whoring, claps, dice, and ſcriveners. What do you think of me now, old gentleman?

Eſop. Pray what do you think of yourſelf?

Beau. I don't think at all: I know how to beſtow my time better.

Eſop. Are you married?

Beau No——————have you ever a daughter to beſtow upon me?

Eſop. She wou'd be well beſtow'd.

Beau. Why, I'm a ſtrong young dog, you old put you: ſhe may be worſe coupled ——

Eſop. Have you then a mind to a wife, Sir?

Beau. *Yaw, min Heer.*

Eſop. What wou'd you do with her?

Beau. Why, I'd take care of her affairs, rid her of all her troubles, her maidenhead, and her portion.

Eſop. And pray what ſort of wife wou'd you be willing to throw yourſelf away upon?

Beau. Why, upon one that has youth, beauty, quality virtue, wit and money.

Eſop. And how may you be qualified yourſelf, to back you in your pretenſions to ſuch a one?

Beau. Why, I am qualified with——a perriwig——— a ſnuff box ———a feather———a———ſmooth face ——a fool's head——and a patch.

Eſop. But one queſtion more: what ſettlements can you make?

Beau. Settlements!———— why, if ſhe be a very great heireſs indeed, I believe I may ſettle———myſelf upon her for life, and my pox upon her children for ever.

Eſop. 'Tis enough; you may expect I'll ſerve you, if it lies in my way. But I wou'd not have you rely too much upon your ſucceſs, becauſe people ſometimes are miſtaken———

As for example———

An ape there was of nimble parts,
A great intruder into hearts,
As briſk, and gay, and full of air,
As you, or I, or any here;
Rich in his dreſs, of ſplendid ſhew,
And with an head like any beau:
Eternal mirth was in his face;
Where'er he went,
He was content,
So fortune had but kindly ſent
Some ladies ———and a looking-glaſs.
Encouragement they always gave him,
Encouragement to play the fool;
For ſoon they found it was a tool,
Wou'd hardly be ſo much in love,
But that the mumbling of a glove,
Or tearing of a fan, wou'd ſave him.

Theſe bounties he accepts as proof
Of feats done by his wit and youth;
He gives their freedom gone for ever,
Concludes each female heart undone,
Except that very happy one,
To which he'd pleaſe to do the favour,

In ſhort, ſo ſmooth his matters went,
He gueſt, where'er his thoughts were bent,
The lady he muſt carry.
So put on a fine new cravat,
He comb'd his wig, he cockt his hat,
And gave it out, he'd marry.
But here, alas! he found to's coſt,
He had reckon'd long without his hoſt:
For whereſoe'er he made th' attack,
Poor pug with ſhame was beaten back.

The firſt fair ſhe he had in chace,
Was a young cat, extremely rich,
Her mother was a noted witch;
So had the daughter prov'd but civil,
He had been related to the devil.
But when he came
To urge his flame,
She ſcratch'd him o'er the face.

With that he went among the bitches,
Such as had beauty, wit and riches,
And ſwore Miſs Maulken, to her coſt,
Shou'd quickly ſee what ſhe had loſt:
But the poor unlucky ſwain
Miſs'd his ſhepherdeſs again;
His fate was to miſcarry.
It was his deſtiny to find,
That cats and dogs are of a mind,
When monkeys come to marry.

Beau. 'Tis very well;——'tis very well, old ſpark, I ſay 'tis very well. Becauſe I han't a pair of plod ſhoes, and a dirty ſhirt, you think a woman won't venture upon me for a husband ——why now to ſhew you, old father, how little you philoſophers know of the ladies——— I'll tell you an adventure of a friend of mine.

A hand, a bob-wig, and a feather,
Attack'd a lady's heart together,

The band in a moſt learned plea,
Made up of deep philoſophy,
Told her, if ſhe wou'd pleaſe to wed
A reverend beard, and take inſtead
Of vigorous youth,
Old ſolemn truth,
With books and morals into bed,
How happy ſhe wou'd be.

The bob he talk'd of management,
What wondrous bleſſings Heaven ſent
On care, and pains, and induſtry;
And truly he muſt be ſo free,
To own he thought your airy beaux,
With powder'd wigs and dancing ſhoes,
Were good for nothing (mend his ſoul)
But prate, and talk, and play the fool.

He ſaid 'twas wealth *gave joy and mirth,*
And that to be the deareſt wife,
Of one who labour'd all his life,
To make a mine of gold his own,
And not ſpend ſix-pence *when he'd done,*
Was heaven upon earth.

When theſe two blades had done, d'ye ſee,
The feather (as it might be me)
Steps out, Sir, from behind the ſcreen,
With ſuch an air, and ſuch a mein,
Look you, old gentleman, in ſhort,
He quickly ſpoil'd the ſtateſman's ſport.

It prov'd ſuch ſun-ſhine weather,
That you muſt know, at the firſt beck
The lady leapt about his neck,
And off they went together.

To Eſop.] There's a tale for your tale, old dad, and ſo ——*Serviteur.* [*Exit.*

FINIS.

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6